# Hear Every Voice

## A Guide to Public Involvement at Mn/DOT

June 1999

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT VISION STATEMENT

To proactively seek early and continuing public input and involvement so that Mn/DOT is responsive and accountable to its traditional and non-traditional stakeholders, communicates effectively with the public, and makes the best possible transportation decisions promoting safety and enhancing the quality of life of Minnesota's citizens.

## DOCUMENT PURPOSE

To provide statewide guidance for Mn/DOT planners and project managers on designing and implementing public involvement programs to achieve Mn/DOT's strategic vision of putting our customers first and balancing their interests to achieve the greatest public good.

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# Acronyms

**ADA** . . . . . .Americans with Disabilities Act
**ATP** . . . . . .Area Transportation Partnership
**DEIS** . . . . . .Draft Environmental Impact Statement
**DNR** . . . . . .Department of Natural Resources
**EA** . . . . . .Environmental Assessment
**EAW** . . . . . .Environmental Assessment Worksheet
**EIS** . . . . . .Environmental Impact Statement
**EPA** . . . . . .Environmental Protection Agency
**EQB** . . . . . .Environmental Quality Board
**FEIS** . . . . . .Final Environmental Impact Statement
**FHWA** . . . . . .Federal Highway Administration
**FONSI** . . . . . .Finding of No Significant Impact
**FTA** . . . . . .Federal Transit Administration
**ISTEA** . . . . . .Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act
**Mn/DOT** . . . . . .Minnesota Department of Transportation
**MPO** . . . . . .Metropolitan Planning Organization
**NEPA** . . . . . .National Environmental Policy Act
**NTTS** . . . . . .Non-Traditional Transportation Stakeholder
**PAC** . . . . . .Public Advisory Committee
**PIP** . . . . . .Public Involvement Plan
**PS&E** . . . . . .Plans, Specifications and Estimates
**R/W** . . . . . .Right of Way
**RDC** . . . . . .Regional Development Commission
**RGU** . . . . . .Responsible Governing Unit
**ROD** . . . . . .Record of Decision
**SDIC** . . . . . .Systematic Development of Informed Consent
**SEE** . . . . . .Social, Economic and Environmental
**STIP** . . . . . .State Transportation Improvement Program
**TAM** . . . . . .Transportation Action Model
**TEA-21** . . . . . .Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century
**TIP** . . . . . .Transportation Improvement Program
**TSP** . . . . . .Transportation System Plan
**USDOT** . . . . . .United States Department of Transportation

# Executive Summary

In August 1997, Mn/DOT formed a Public Involvement Task Force for the purpose of developing a guide to public involvement at Mn/DOT, a comprehensive report that provides guidance to planners and program managers in order to achieve our vision of making the best possible transportation decisions promoting safety and enhancing the quality of life of Minnesotas citizens. In order to involve the public in the work of the task force, market research was conducted in selected areas around the state. Citizen focus groups were conducted in the cities of Mankato, Grand Rapids, Minneapolis, and Marshall, during late January and early February, 1998. Two focus groups were held in each city. Persons identified to serve on these focus groups were selected at random and were asked to provide input on how Mn/DOT could improve the effectiveness of its current public participation techniques and strategies. Focus group results are given on pages 8-11.

The 25-member task force met over a period of 10 months to review federal and state requirements for public involvement and best practices nationwide. Membership primarily consisted of Mn/DOT staff. Persons serving on the task force represented both the transportation planning and project development disciplines.

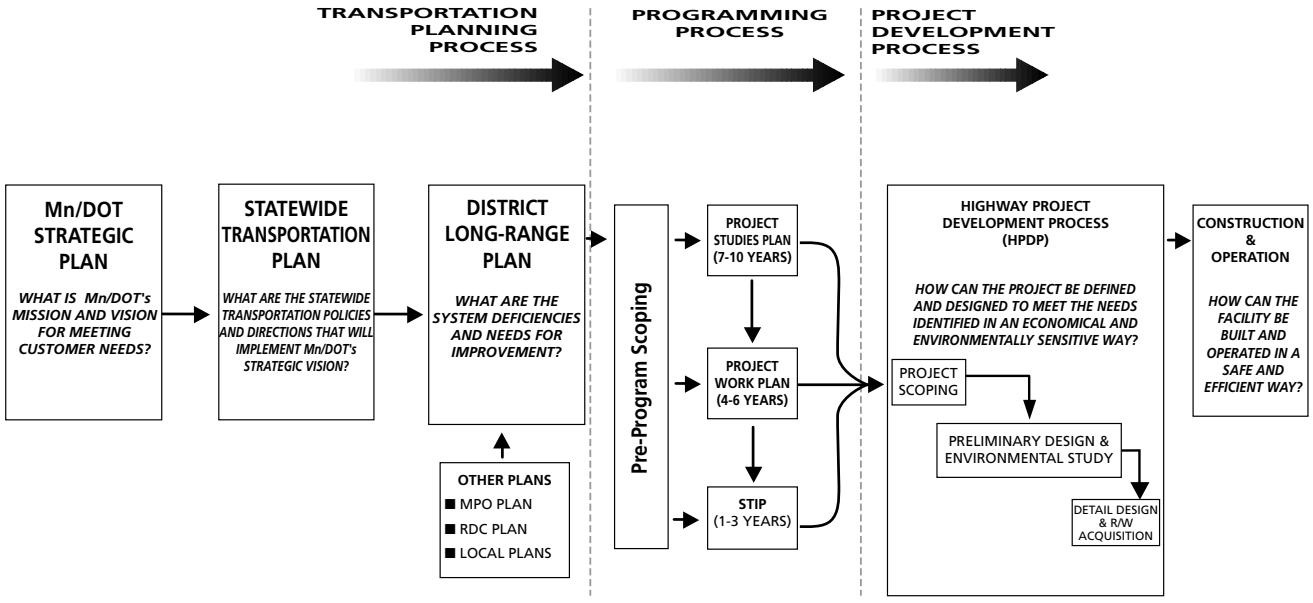
## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT GUIDELINES

The following public involvement guidelines were developed to assist Mn/DOT personnel in implementing public involvement plans and activities. They reflect the mandates of ISTEA, reinforced by TEA-21, as well as public agency best practices.

1. For all Mn/DOT plans and projects, public involvement plans should be developed and tailored to the complexities of the project.
2. Solicit public involvement as early as possible.
3. When possible and appropriate, Mn/DOT employees will plan for smaller, more informal group meetings and discussion.
4. Mailing lists, including known neighborhood associations, civic and cultural groups, environmental organizations, citizens advisory committees, and organizations and associations with low income, minority, elderly, and disabled constituents will be kept up-to-date as appropriate.
5. Mn/DOT employees will make an effort to go where the people are.
6. Communication must be two-way, continuing, and consistent.
7. Mn/DOT is committed to being clear about the process of public involvement and how it ties into decision-making.
8. Innovative tools and media will be used to communicate to the public.
9. Varying types of incentives may be necessary given the type of project, or plan, and the people who are invited to the meeting.

## Mn/DOT's PLANNING/PROGRAMMING/PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The planning/programming/project development chart which follows depicts the major planning documents which Mn/DOT, and our transportation partners, produce and how these planning documents relate to Mn/DOTs programming and project development processes. The planning and programming processes are generally applicable to all modes (highways, transit, aeronautics, rail, waterways, and bikeways). The project development process specifically applies to state-owned highways. For airport facilities and transit services, which Mn/DOT funds but neither owns nor operates, local project processes apply. This chart is intended to clarify for the general public, as well as for planners and project managers within Mn/DOT, the relationship between long-range planning and construction and operation of the system and all the steps in between. This process is an ongoing and ultimately cyclical one as information about aging facilities and new transportation needs leads to new analysis of system conditions and deficiencies.



# INTRODUCTION

## HEAR EVERY VOICE

# Introduction

Public involvement has always been part of a successful public agency's mission. This fact is borne out again and again in a world where competing interests must come to consensus on how to address multiple social needs. As might be expected, solutions to difficult and important questions are rarely easy to achieve. There is no computer program that can accomplish the aims of citizen participation. There is no formula that can be applied leading to the "right" answer. Instead, the process of soliciting, listening, and responding to what citizens and customers have to say about a public agency's plans for action can be a complicated, challenging, and often intimidating process for all involved. However, when it is done well and thoroughly, it is also a rewarding and meaningful experience that leads to better decisions on issues of important public policy. It is the intention of this guide to achieve enhanced decision-making; to hear every voice, and to continue to move the Minnesota Department of Transportation ever closer to its vision of providing a "coordinated transportation network that provides safe, user-friendly access and movement, and responds to the values of Minnesota's citizens." (Mn/DOT Strategic Plan, June 1997)

Now, more than ever, people are expecting greater accountability from public officials, and are subsequently demanding higher levels of efficiency and quality from the products and services provided by government agencies. In many instances, projects and programs are being scrutinized to ensure they are worthy of the public's investment. The public also understands that no issue is so technically compelling that it cannot be challenged.

At the same time, skepticism abounds as to whether involvement will lead to any real influence on government programs, policies, or projects. Unfortunately, the old paradigm for garnering citizen input reinforces this perception. Holding one or two formal public hearings after the bulk of planning and project development work has been completed is clearly not sufficient for any government agency committed to being responsive to the needs of its customers.

Effective public involvement often occurs between apathy and anger. The job of any public agency is to communicate in such a way that apathy is overcome and anger forestalled. This can be accomplished by ensuring that public involvement is a component of decision-making. Public agencies must remember that all public involvement is local, that objectives, activities, the level of effort, and the timing of public involvement must be individualized to address the unique characteristics and needs of an affected community, region, or state. For all Mn/DOT plans and projects, public involvement plans should be developed and tailored to the complexities of the project.

Failure to seek meaningful public involvement can have severe consequences on the final outcome of a project, plan, or study. Mn/DOT employees must actively seek citizen input and explicitly consider this input in their decision-making. Doing so will foster improved two-way communication and trust between Mn/DOT and its customers. It will also lead to the development of better products and services that not only address real problems, but also have value and promote the quality of life in Minnesota. The guidance and techniques outlined in the following pages should assist in this effort.

This guide is organized by chapters. It can be read in its entirety, or piecemeal as the reader's needs dictate. Chapter 1 discusses the background and methods employed by the Mn/DOT task force which created *Hear Every Voice*, including a discussion of the ways in which we sought public involvement to guide our efforts. Chapter 2 discusses how public involvement has evolved within Mn/DOT in response to various federal and state regulations. This chapter also includes public involvement guidelines which the task force drafted, in response not only to the regulations, but also to our own survey of "best practices" from other states and agencies. In addition, a discussion of how to develop a public involvement plan to implement these guidelines is included. Chapter 3 describes Mn/DOT's planning and programming processes, and Chapter 4 details how highway projects are developed. Chapter 5 contains information and lists resources regarding specific public involvement techniques, in addition to case studies describing public involvement as it has functioned in the course of a project development or planning process.

We hope that this guide is as informative and inspiring for those reading it as it was for those of us who served on the task force and drafted it. In the end, successful public involvement will only be realized after everyone involved in planning and project development has made a commitment to it – a commitment of time, resources, and energy. It may seem a daunting challenge, but it is one that public agencies cannot afford to let pass by. Not only is public involvement required by law, it will help develop the best plans and projects possible. Hopefully this guide will accomplish its purpose, to motivate to action and to instruct. But its ultimate success can only be realized by going out into our communities and engaging in a long dialogue with all its members. This conversation should be an instructive one for everyone involved. By hearing every voice, being sensitive to every need, and balancing all against the particularities of time and place, we will help ourselves and our communities travel a smooth path toward a mutually acceptable outcome.

# CHAPTER 1

# HEAR EVERY VOICE

# PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TASK FORCE

## BACKGROUND

In August 1997, Mn/DOT formed a public involvement task force for the purpose of developing this guide. The 25-member task force met over a period of 10 months to review federal and state requirements and to develop new guidance pertaining to public involvement. Membership primarily consisted of Mn/DOT staff. Persons serving on the task force represented both the transportation planning and project development disciplines. Input was also solicited from Mn/DOT employees who provided examples of their past activities in public involvement.

Two reports that provided critical background information were Mn/DOT's "Non-Traditional Transportation Stakeholder/Dialogue Project" Final Report (discussed on pp. 16-19) and the Minnesota 1997/98 "Omnibus Report" discussed below.

### University of Minnesota Omnibus Report

Each year the University of Minnesota's Center for Survey Research conducts a statewide and metropolitan public opinion survey, the details of which are published in the "Omnibus Report." The fourteenth annual "Omnibus Report" was conducted via the "Minnesota State Survey" (MSS '97) during the months of October, November, and December of 1997. This annual survey is comprised of a variety of topics, as submitted by separate state agencies. Response rate for the 800 telephone interviews was 65% which was consistent with the previous year, and compares reasonably well with other omnibus social surveys. The sample for this survey consisted of households selected randomly from all Minnesota telephone exchanges. All households in the state (with telephones) had an equal chance to be called, as did each adult member within the household.

Three questions gauging the public's satisfaction with current opportunities to involve themselves in transportation project decisions were asked in the 1997/98 survey.

- Of metro area residents, 60 percent were very-to somewhat-satisfied with their opportunity to be involved in transportation project decisions. In greater Minnesota, this figure increased slightly with 64 percent of the population falling into this category. Those Minnesotans dissatisfied with their opportunity for involvement are generally asking for more information (19%). Notably, 30% of this dissatisfied group stated clearly that they are not interested in becoming more involved in transportation project decisions.

- The methods identified as the most effective at informing people about opportunities for involvement in future transportation decisions were: television (60%), radio (57%), newsletters (52%), newspaper articles (52%), public notices in newspapers (44%), public meetings (31%), and the Internet (27%). Notably, public meetings is not a preferred method of communication for informing people about opportunities for involvement in future transportation decisions, neither is the Internet.
- Generally, there is more interest in becoming involved in future transportation project decisions among Twin Cities metro area residents (55%) than those residing in Greater Minnesota (47%). However, both areas indicate an opportunity to engage more Minnesotans in our transportation planning process. An increase in involvement (over time) may lead to higher levels of satisfaction. It is notable that the satisfaction level with project decision involvement was the lowest seen for all Mn/DOT customer satisfaction questions asked in the 1997/98 "Omnibus Report."

The task force also researched a number of relevant federal and state policies and regulations pertaining to public involvement in the areas of transportation planning and programming. These policies are discussed in Chapter 2 – "Public Involvement in Mn/DOT's Planning and Project Development Process."

## Public Involvement Focus Groups

In order to involve the public in the work of the task force, market research was conducted in selected areas around the state. Citizen focus groups were conducted in the cities of Mankato, Grand Rapids, Minneapolis, and Marshall during late January and early February 1998. Two focus groups were held in each city. Persons identified to serve on these focus groups were selected at random and were asked to provide input on how Mn/DOT could improve the effectiveness of its current public participation techniques and strategies. A consultant was engaged to organize and conduct the focus group discussions. The results are summarized below.

### SUMMARY OF FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

*Public Involvement in Public Issues*

- Most respondents currently volunteer their time to organizations and civic causes, or have done so in the past. Several group members were motivated to get involved in causes that directly affect them or their families.

- Some group members indicated that they have had to limit their involvement in such causes due to the time commitments of careers, families, etc.

- The participants derived a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction from their involvement in causes and organizations. Recognition, gratitude, and a sense of fulfillment were also said to be significant motivating factors in stimulating the participants to volunteer their time or efforts. Individuals were said to be more likely to get involved in causes if they feel that they can "make a difference" and actually accomplish something of substance.

- Comments were made that citizens have an obligation to "give something back" to their communities.

*Mn/DOT Issues of Interest to the Public*

- Mn/DOT is recognized as the agency responsible for planning, building, and maintaining the state's roadways. The group members assume that these efforts, as well as funding, are coordinated with the appropriate city, county, and federal departments.

- Respondents most often find out about proposed Mn/DOT projects by reading about them in their local newspapers. Comments were made, however, that newspaper articles rarely give details such as when the projects will begin, the expected duration, or who will be directly affected. Naturally, the participants' level of interest in a specific project depends on the degree to which it will have an impact on their personal situations. Suggestions were made that there should be a regular column in newspapers dedicated to transportation-related matters, including announcements of public hearings and informational meetings. A few respondents would also like to see notices of proposed projects on the Internet and posted on the roadside in the areas to be affected.

- Snow and ice removal and providing attractive green spaces were thought to be areas in which Mn/DOT is particularly proficient. Observations were made that these aspects make the department seem especially responsive to the needs of the citizenry and comparatively well-run.

- Remarks were made that reports of upcoming projects often appear after the design has been approved and plans have been formalized. In these cases, the

notices seem to serve solely as confirmation, and public hearings are held for informational purposes only.

- Most respondents who live in construction corridors said that Mn/DOT has kept and is keeping them "a part of the process." They receive notices of meetings, information about the progress of the project, and timeline updates.

*Interest in Getting Involved in Mn/DOT Planning and Project Development*

- Group members who have attended Mn/DOT sponsored public hearings have varying opinions of the effectiveness of the forums. Some said the meetings were interesting and informative. They were able to express their views and felt as though they actually participated in the proceedings. Others were frustrated by the experience. They had the distinct impression that the Mn/DOT representatives were simply presenting the finalized plan and were indifferent to any suggestions, criticism, or opposition. Some respondents, especially those who have had previous involvement in Mn/DOT sponsored meetings, expressed frustration over the agency's apparent unresponsive nature.

- There is no clear consensus regarding how involved the public should be in the transportation decision-making process. Some participants maintained that residents should be consulted from the inception of a project proposal. Most, however, were more comfortable examining a few potential scenarios once they have been researched and the ramifications of each had been identified. They thought that Mn/DOT should be prepared to submit various scenarios and offer alternatives for interested parties to consider and discuss.

- Several participants said that meetings would attract more attendees if they were small gatherings of ten or twelve people, similar to a focus group. Large "town hall" type meetings were said to be intimidating and make people too self-conscious to speak. Participants often feel that they are not being heard or understood in large gatherings.

- Suggestions were made to post signs in the area of the roadway under consideration and invite feedback from the public. Some respondents thought that the agency should poll people at busy locations, such as truck stops and shopping malls.

- Extending personal invitations to meetings was expected to increase attendance and active participation in Mn/DOT meetings. The individual attention conveys the feeling that the agency is genuinely interested in the respondents' opinions and feedback and that there would be a productive exchange of ideas. Several participants acknowledged that they would not have attended the focus group without being personally invited and that they would not attend a public meeting if they merely saw a notice in the newspaper.

## FOCUS GROUP CONCLUSIONS

Some clear directions emerge from the input received from our citizen focus groups: it is evident that people respond to being addressed personally and politely; that it works best to provide a forum where everyone is listened to, and just as importantly, afforded a response; that people want to be given a real chance to affect decisions that affect their lives; and finally, it is nice to not only be given a choice but to be given information to help make a reasoned decision. The public involvement guidelines found in the following chapter elaborate on these principles.

What is not so clear is *when* to involve people. While some participants felt they wanted a chance to give input from the inception of a planned action, many others were willing to wait until alternative scenarios had been developed and ramifications identified. Resolving this question will involve a sensitivity by project managers and planning directors to the unique situation and circumstances of each project. Information found in the succeeding chapters of this document on identifying stakeholders and developing public involvement plans should help to frame this issue.

# CHAPTER 2

## HEAR EVERY VOICE

## Mn/DOT PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

## Public Involvement in Mn/DOT's Planning and Project Development Process

Public involvement in transportation planning, programming, and project development is the process to inform and involve the public in the development of a proposed action. Several federal and state laws have requirements pertaining to public outreach on transportation decision-making.

FHWA and FTA regulations (23 CFR 771) implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (as amended) (42 U.S.C. 4321, et. seq.) outline minimum requirements for providing opportunities for the public to be informed and involved in the project development process for proposed improvements supported, at least in part, with federal funds. These minimum standards include published legal notices and public hearings (as required) to obtain public input regarding environmental documents for transportation projects.

The federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (42 U.S.S.A. 12101, et. seq.) stipulates involving the community, particularly those with disabilities, in the development and improvement of transportation and paratransit plans and services.

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) (23 U.S.C., Sections 134 and 135; 49 U.S.C. app. 1607) and its 1998 successor, TEA-21, emphasize public participation in the transportation planning and programming process. Regulations implementing TEA-21 have yet to be issued by the federal government. In their absence, ISTEA requirements are discussed below.

ISTEA requires states and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to involve their constituents as a precondition to using federal funds for transportation improvements. Specific public involvement performance standards are included in the federal regulations for implementing ISTEA. These federal regulations apply to the development of and major amendments to metropolitan (and rural) long-range transportation plans and Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) and to the "Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan" and the "Statewide Transportation Improvement Program" (STIP).

Mn/DOT's public involvement approach will include:

**Early and Continuing Public Involvement** opportunities throughout the transportation planning and programming process.

**Timely Information** about transportation issues and processes to citizens, other interested parties, and segments of the community affected by transportation plans, programs, and projects.

**Reasonable Public Access** to technical and policy information used in the development of the plan and STIP.

**Adequate Public Notice** of public involvement activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including, but not limited to, action on the plan and STIP.

A process for demonstrating **Explicit Consideration and Response** to public input during the planning and program development process.

A process for **Seeking Out and Considering the Needs of those Traditionally Underserved** by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households which may face challenges accessing employment and other amenities.

**Periodic Review** of the effectiveness of the public involvement process to ensure that the process provides full and open access to all and revision of the process as necessary.

## Reaching Non-Traditional Stakeholders and Achieving Environmental Justice

In order to arrive at the optimal planning and project development decisions, it is important to involve as diverse a range of voices in the community as possible. By listening to affected communities, and understanding alternative viewpoints, the best decisions will be made. However, there are many challenges to meet in garnering diverse input. Situational barriers such as meeting times and locations, and the need for child care exist. More difficult to overcome are differences in perception such as agency mistrust and a belief that all critical decisions have already been made. Public agencies must meet these challenges if they are to maintain their legitimacy, achieve their missions, and provide the best public service possible.

Several state and federal policies and regulations reinforce the need to reach out to segments of our community whose voices are not regularly heard in the transportation planning and decision-making process. As discussed, ISTEA requires that state

transportation agencies have a public involvement process that seeks out and considers the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households.

A Presidential Executive Order on Environmental Justice (EO 12898 Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations), issued on February 11, 1994, also focuses federal agencies' attention on reaching out to certain segments of the community. This Executive Order requires each federal agency to achieve environmental justice by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations in the United States. Mn/DOT must comply with USDOT's Final Order to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, which specifically requires that "procedures shall be established, or expanded, as necessary, to provide meaningful opportunities for public involvement by members of minority and low-income populations during the planning, and development of programs, policies, and activities." Even though environmental justice concerns have been addressed through many federal mandates including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), serves to heighten the awareness and concern for identifying and addressing social and community impacts. Identifying community impacts is not a completely objective process because peoples' values and perspectives must be taken into consideration. These can only be discerned by active listening and respectful participation by all parties.

Mn/DOT has recently published guidance that details how we intend to accomplish the aims of the Executive Order on Environmental Justice. This is included as Appendix B to this document.

A useful resource for Mn/DOT planning and project development managers in outreach efforts to the underserved communities identified in ISTEA and in the Environmental Justice Executive Order is Mn/DOTs "Non-Traditional Transportation Stakeholder (NTTS)/Dialogue Project" Final Report and a companion handbook entitled "Methods and Approaches to Enhance Involvement in Non-Traditional Transportation Stakeholder Communities and Neighborhoods." The project was designed to help identify non-traditional transportation stakeholder groups (defined as people of color, low-income constituencies, the disabled community, neighborhood groups, and civic and cultural groups). The project was also intended to help build partnerships with non-traditional transportation stakeholders and learn more effective ways of involving all

segments of the public. From the insights of that project came the methods and approaches outlined in the handbook, including:

- Improving access to the process;
- How to approach non-traditional stakeholders;
- Developing community profiles;
- Techniques for improving access;
- Providing opportunities for influence; and,
- Conducting group facilitation meetings.

Another resource for planners and project managers is a manual prepared jointly by the USDOT and the National Transit Institute entitled "Public Involvement in Transportation Decisionmaking." The following information on reaching non-traditional stakeholders is excerpted from this source.

Some key steps to including traditionally underserved communities are to:

- Determine if the community is, in fact, underrepresented or not participating;
- Identify the barriers to participation;
- Identify methods or activities to overcome barriers to participation.

When determining if a community is underrepresented or not participating you should, as a minimum, research and analyze the make-up of decision-making and advisory bodies to ensure that issues and concerns of the underserved community are reaching decision-makers. Another task is to research the level of participation of the non-traditional stakeholders at hearings, public meetings, or other public forums and determine what percent of the attendees at the hearings and meetings are from these communities. Common barriers to participation include: culture, language, mobility and other disabilities, economic/income barriers, lack of full inclusion and opportunity for participation, mistrust of the system, and past discriminatory practices. Methods to overcome these barriers follow:

*Cultural Barriers*

- Identify and reach out to local community organizations and their leaders; and,
- Research their culture, customs, language, and communication styles.

*Language Barriers*

- Identify bilingual speakers;

- Distribute multi-lingual notices, fact sheets, and newsletters; and,
- Provide interpreters.

*Mobility and Other Disabilities*

- Use accessible facilities for mobility impaired individuals;
- Provide sign language interpreters for hearing impaired people at meetings;
- Use telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) to communicate via telephone with hearing impaired people; and,
- Provide materials in large print, audio, Braille, and computer diskette formats for visually-impaired people.

*Economic/Income Barriers*

- Schedule meetings or other face-to-face interactions at a time and place that accommodates participants' schedules so that schedule and travel constraints are minimized; and,
- Consider financially subsidizing their participation, such as:
  1. Transit fare
  2. Child care

## Public Involvement Guidelines

All Mn/DOT employees are involved in some way in public involvement. Even if they do not have direct contact with citizens, their actions ultimately have an impact on how our transportation system functions and on how Mn/DOT is perceived by our customers. The following public involvement guidelines, incorporating what we heard from the focus groups on public involvement and other "best practices", were developed to assist all Mn/DOT employees in implementing the objectives of public involvement:

1. **For all Mn/DOT plans and projects, public involvement plans should be developed and tailored to the complexities of the project.** The level of detail of the public involvement plan should be commensurate with the project or plan's magnitude and potential impacts.

2. **Solicit public involvement as early as possible.** Clearly people do not want to have their time wasted by being asked to comment on a project on which they can have little, if any, substantive input. By getting people involved as early as possible in the process and by framing the issues so that people can understand what the

issues are and how their communities may be affected, the opportunity for substantive input is maximized. Some techniques to accomplish this may include establishing a citizen's advisory committee, doing community surveys, and key person interviews. Tools to engage people and inform them about project possibilities include using graphic displays, such as computer simulation and visualization techniques, printed materials, and traveling displays. Usually what is needed to achieve early and continuing participation is a mix of interactive and passive techniques chosen to illuminate the issues.

3. **When possible, and appropriate, Mn/DOT employees will plan for smaller, more informal group meetings and discussion.** In doing so, we anticipate that people will feel more comfortable asking questions and discussing their opinions regarding transportation plans and projects.

4. **Mailing lists, including known neighborhood associations, civic and cultural groups, environmental organizations, citizens advisory committees, and organizations and associations with low-income, minority, elderly, and disabled constituents will be kept up-to-date as appropriate.** When possible, personal invitations will be made, aimed at soliciting input from groups and individuals whose voices may not otherwise be heard in the transportation planning and project development process.

5. **Mn/DOT employees will make an effort to go where the people are,** e.g., shopping malls, churches, grocery stores, and established community events when appropriate to get community input.

6. **Communication must be two-way, continuing, and consistent.** In two-way communication, Mn/DOT employees are committed to not only hearing what the public has to say, but to being responsive to their input. Being responsive does not equate to being affirmative; we cannot please all people all the time. However, it does mean that we will acknowledge what we have heard from an individual, and communicate our decisions and the basis for making them. Continuing communication means that we will engage people as early, and for as long, as is practical in planning and project development. We will also be consistent about communicating the level of potential impact the public can have on a proposed plan or project.

7. **Mn/DOT is committed to being clear about the process of public involvement and how it ties into decision-making.** To this end, we are developing

informational materials (including this document) which will describe Mn/DOT's planning and programming process. These materials will detail the opportunities for people to affect decisions and demonstrate the points in the process where input will affect the future of Minnesota's transportation system.

8. **Innovative tools and media will be used to communicate to our public.** These can range from "low-tech" highway signs and billboards, to telephone hotlines, internet sites, and providing e-mail addresses for public comment on proposed plans of action, as well as distributing multi-lingual publications.

9. **Varying types of incentives may be necessary given the type of project, or plan, and the people who are invited to the meeting.** Incentives can include: child-care, transit or taxi fare, refreshments, or other incentives attractive to the individuals invited. Depending on the type of project (long-term vs. short-term) and the level of input (in-depth discussion vs. public hearing testimony) the need for incentives will vary. Project managers and planners need to bear this in mind when they are planning and budgeting for public involvement programs.

## Developing Public Involvement Plans

Certain Mn/DOT personnel are responsible for overseeing public involvement programs for specific projects, and for various types of transportation plans. For these people, developing public involvement plans is a critical task. The level of detail of the plan will depend on the magnitude and potential impacts of the project or plan. The following steps, excerpted from the National Transit Institute manual "Public Involvement in Transportation Decision Making," describe this process.

### *1) Identify and assess stakeholders and their issues*

A stakeholder is any person or group that is affected by a transportation plan, program, or project, including those not aware they are affected. Stakeholders may also be any person or group that think they may be affected by a transportation plan, program, or project even if they are not actually affected. They are a subset of the public. By identifying stakeholder groups you can systematically examine the many different segments of the public and the means to involve them. Typical stakeholders vary depending on the phase of the transportation decision-making process. Stakeholders include:

- Non-governmental organizations such as environmental, health, citizen, neighborhood, and civic organizations;

- Traditionally underserved communities such as low-income, racial and ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities;
- Residents of affected geographic areas;
- Commuters and tourists;
- Transportation professionals such as transportation service providers; and,
- Government agencies - even those without a formal role in decision making.

Stakeholders may be identified through:

***Self-identification*** - anyone who participates by attending a meeting, writing a letter, or phoning for information.

***Third-party identification*** - ask representatives of interest groups for their suggestions or key contacts.

***Staff identification*** - this can be a rich source for identifying potential groups or individuals.

***Other agencies/organizations*** - state, city, and county planning agencies, Metropolitan Planning Organizations and regional planning organizations, and private transportation providers and shippers.

***User survey*** - conducted on users of transportation facilities and services.

Sources to identify potential stakeholder groups or individuals include:

- yellow pages
- associations or neighborhood groups
- service organizations
- newspaper library (i.e. letters to the editor)
- lists maintained by planning departments
- universities and schools
- bicycle shops and outdoor stores
- mass transit providers
- residents and businesses in the area
- historical records
- lists of participants in earlier studies
- minority organizations
- advocacy groups (the disabled, pedestrians, bicycling, safety, minorities, low-income)
- chambers of commerce
- voter records
- city and county directories
- direct mail lists
- clean air advocacy organizations
- mass transit user groups
- trail organizations, groups, and clubs
- landscape architecture professionals
- rail passenger associations
- complaint files
- government agency personnel
- agencies serving low-income populations
- Metro Commuter Services

For each stakeholder you identify, you need to:

- Assess their knowledge of the project or plan;
- Identify their initial issues and concerns - not just transportation-related but in general;
- Assess their overall level of interest; and,
- Determine their preferences for frequency and means of interaction.

The best way to perform this assessment is to speak directly with each stakeholder, when practicable, and while doing so, ask them who else should be contacted. After awhile, the outside contacts will cease bringing up new names and the identification process is completed. However, new people can and do turn up at any point in a public involvement effort.

*2) Define the objectives of your public involvement effort*

Establish objectives that broadly address stakeholder concerns as well as planning and project development goals. The objectives will guide all outreach activities. Objectives can be established as part of the initial phases of early public involvement activities and will rarely change over the course of the outreach effort. Ask yourself if each objective can be measured. For each objective, ask yourself *why?*

**Some examples of general public involvement objectives are to:**

- Identify and involve traditionally underserved communities in defining the problems to be addressed by the project or plan.
- Educate the public as to the funding and decision-making requirements specified by regulations.
- Maintain timely contact with key stakeholders throughout the process. At a minimum, some type of contact should be maintained no less than every four months.
- Build credibility for the Agency.

**Possible objectives for public involvement in a transportation plan are to:**

- Involve as many stakeholders as possible so that all viewpoints are heard.
- Provide an information base to educate and inform stakeholders.
- Foster constructive debate about transportation issues.
- Obtain input from the public on policies and investment strategies.

**Possible objectives for public involvement in project development are to:**

- Get to know and understand all potentially affected parties.
- Determine and clarify key issues.
- Identify environmental and social issues for further study.
- Entice affected parties to participate in project development.

*3) Identify public involvement activities*

In planning your outreach effort, consider the following:

- Who are you trying to reach?
- What message or information do you want to convey or receive?
- How much will it cost?
- Which combination of techniques (and how many) is most appropriate?
- How easy (or difficult) is it to implement?
- Relate each activity to your objectives. (For examples of public involvement activities see Chapter 5 and Appendix A of this document.)

Characteristics of effective public involvement activities include those that:

- Meet a particular need and objective;
- Are appropriate for the scale of the project;
- Are appropriate to, and reach, target stakeholders in the relevant geographic area;
- Can be implemented within budgetary and time constraints; and,
- Are compatible with the community's operations, structure, politics, and style.

*4) Evaluation*

Evaluate your public involvement effort based on achievement of objectives and feedback from the public. Design milestones during the public involvement process at which point the status of the effort can be reviewed against the objectives. As issues and concerns change over time, your public involvement plan should reflect these changes. Always ask, "Is this still the case?"

As public involvement proceeds, document how public input affected decisions. Start with any documentation of public concerns and input, such as meeting summaries from public forums, responses from questionnaires, and comments from draft environmental impact statements. Next, group key issues together and respond to them stating how the input affected the final decision. Highlight areas where public input actually changed the final decision. It is acceptable to not incorporate all of the public's advice, but you should take the time to explain the reasoning behind this decision. People will typically give their support if they believe the process was fair and their concerns were considered. Finally, communicate back to the participants how they affected the decision.

Part of any evaluation effort involves measuring the results of a public involvement

process against established measures for success. Including this component is important in order to allow a project manager or transportation planner to make necessary adjustments as the process progresses and to improve future public involvement plans. The difficulty in establishing measures of success for public involvement revolves around the subjective nature of public involvement itself. Is a public involvement plan successful if there is a large turnout at public meetings, even if the sentiments expressed are uniformly negative? Is it successful if few people participate but the dialogue is fruitful, with new alternatives suggested that become part of the transportation plan/project? Is it successful if a large number of people participate and are satisfied with their opportunity for input, even if they are not representative of the overall affected community?

The following measures are proposed by the task force for consideration as a means to evaluate the success of public involvement plans at Mn/DOT. The measures themselves will be evaluated as they are implemented, to ensure that they are helping us achieve our vision for public involvement.

| Public Involvement Family of Measures<br>9/2/98 Draft | |
|---|---|
| OUTCOME | MEASURE |
| Build Mn/DOT credibility. | I. Timing: when to start a P.I. Plan and how often contact is made<br>II. What types of media is used (incl. non-english venues)<br>III. Do stakeholders feel that they are a part of planning & project design from the start of process<br>IV. Omnibus Survey results |
| Public Involvement is accessible to all segments of the public. | V. Meeting convenience: time, place, and transit-accessible<br>VI. Were communication tools clear and effective<br>VII. Survey the effectiveness of participation from the participant's perspective<br>VIII. Was outreach program tailored to specific community needs, e.g., cultural and/or language barriers |
| Public Involvement involves a representative group of the community that is part of the planning/project area. | IX. Document demographics of participants<br>X. Was a Citizen's Advisory Board established, if appropriate |
| Public Involvement is responsive to the input received. | XI. Feedback<br>XII. Information exchange<br>XIII. Integration of concerns<br>XIV. Were stakeholder groups able to overcome their self-interest and work toward an overall problem solution<br>XV. Documentation of where P.I. Affected the plan or project. |
| Mn/DOT develops plans/projects that support community goals and values. | XVI. Support of neighborhood/civic/interest groups and affected units of government |

# CHAPTER 3

# HEAR EVERY VOICE

## Mn/DOT'S PLANNING APPROACH

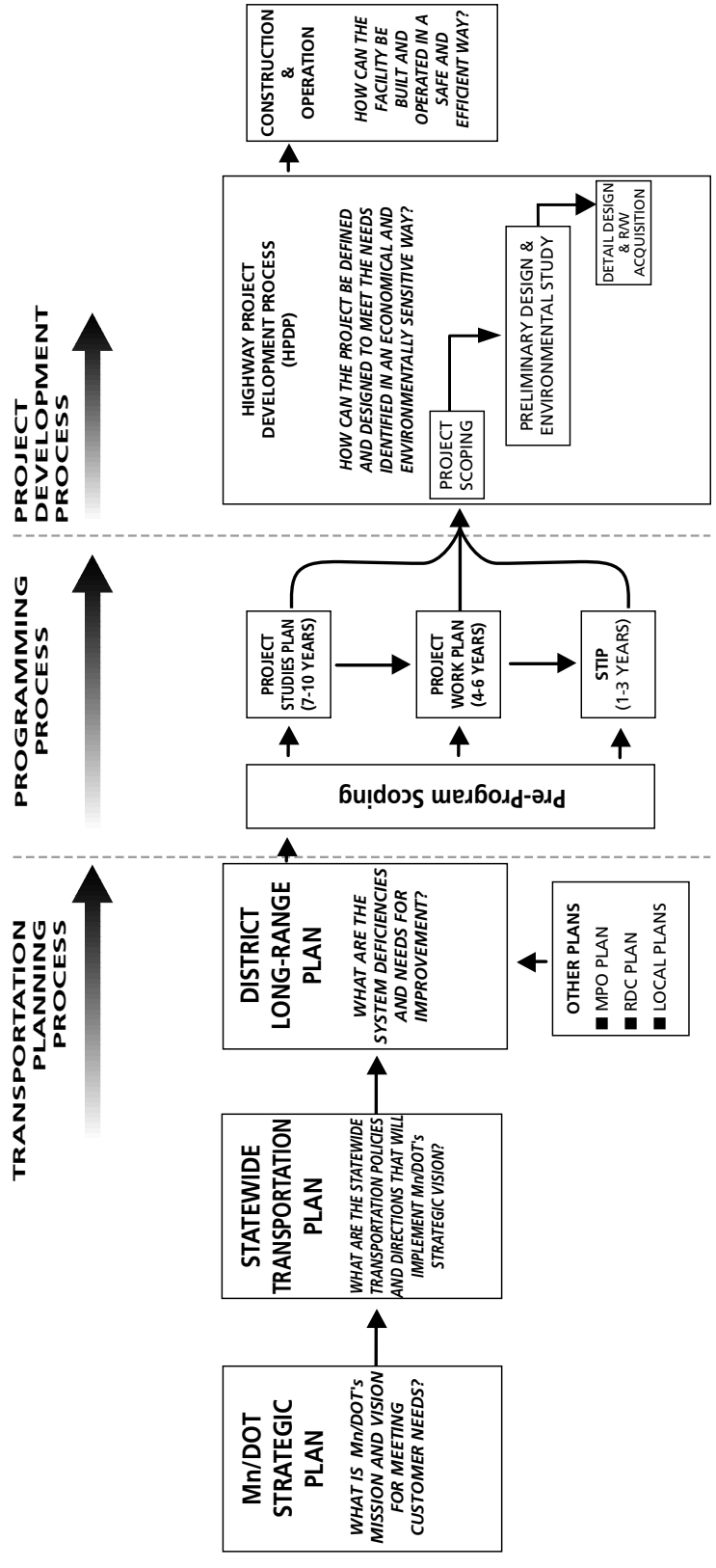
Where does a transportation project come from? What process is used for deciding which projects proceed to implementation? How can a member of the public (not a transportation professional or elected official) have any influence in the transportation decision-making process? These are all questions that anyone in transportation who has talked to the public (or even members of her own family) is inevitably asked. In an attempt to answer this question, Mn/DOT has mapped our planning/programming process (see figure 3-1). It depicts the major planning documents which Mn/DOT (and our transportation partners) produce. Beginning with Mn/DOT's "Strategic Plan" (the most visionary and long-range document) and ending with the "Statewide Transportation Improvement Program" (STIP, a financially-constrained three-year list of transportation projects) there are opportunities for public involvement.

This model begins with the current transportation system condition. In other words, how the roads and highways, transit systems, rail and waterway operations, and air travel are currently operating. At this point in the planning process, all social and demographic data affecting future travel trends must be examined, e.g., workforce participation rates and population age trends. By examining how the system is presently working in conjunction with larger societal and population trends, we can begin to make assumptions about the condition of our transportation system. Focus groups and market research surveys are often used by Mn/DOT to get public input into current system performance.

Mn/DOT's investment principles (see Figure 3-2) expressed as measurable criteria, will be used to determine the most beneficial improvements to Minnesota's transportation system. These principles – to focus on system performance, to ensure economic efficiency, and to support societal goals – evolved from two of Mn/DOT's long-range planning documents: the "Strategic Plan" and the "Statewide Transportation Plan."

The Mn/DOT strategic management process was initiated to integrate public views and state policy goals into a long-term vision for Minnesota's transportation system. The process gathered information from over 600 citizens throughout the state who participated in regional dialogues. From information gathered at the dialogue meetings, Mn/DOT developed a vision along with strategic directions which were later reviewed, simplified, and documented in the 1997 Mn/DOT "Strategic Plan, Charting Our Course." The strategic vision calls for "a coordinated transportation network that provides safe, user-friendly access and movement and responds to the values of Minnesota's citizens." The strategic directions focus on 1) safeguarding what exists, 2) making the network operate better, and 3) making Mn/DOT work better.

**Figure 3-1**
**Mn/DOT's Planning/ Programming/Project Development Process**



The Minnesota "Statewide Transportation Plan" was published in January of 1995 and was updated in 1996 and 1997. The "Statewide Transportation Plan's" focus on access, intermodalism, and values reflects the vision set in the "Strategic Plan." Development of a policy framework based on access, intermodalism, and values resulted in fourteen policy statements grouped under three broad areas: 1) transportation investment priorities, 2) transportation system management, and 3) the transportation decision-making process. These broad areas are closely aligned with the strategic directions in the "Strategic Plan."

Figure 3-2 illustrates the relationship between the "Strategic Plan," the "Statewide Transportation Plan," and the investment principles which drive our investment decisions. This table demonstrates how these documents and strategies complement and enhance one another.

**Figure 3-2**

**Long-Range Planning Relationships**

| Strategic Plan | Minnesota Statewide Transportation Plan | Investment Principles |
|---|---|---|
| *Directions:* | *Policy Statements:* | *Investment Principles:* |
| • Safeguard what exists. | • Transportation investment priorities. | • Focus on system performance. |
| • Make the network operate better. | • Transportation system management. | • Ensure economic efficiency.<br>• Respond to the values of Minnesota's citizens. |
| • Make Mn/DOT work better. | • Transportation decision-making process. | |

The "Strategic Plan" and the "Statewide Transportation Plan" are Mn/DOT's most visionary and long-term planning documents; the "Statewide Transportation Plan" looking at twenty-year trends and transportation needs, and the "Strategic Plan" setting the department-wide direction to meet those needs. Public involvement at this level is less about specific project development than about setting broad policy directions. Although many people choose to wait to involve themselves in the transportation planning process until they see that a proposed project will have a direct impact on them, it is at the long-range, strategic level that their input may have the most impact.

Mn/DOT is not the only transportation agency in Minnesota to engage in long-range planning. Various other agencies and units of government also do so. Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are established in all metropolitan areas with a population of more than 50,000. Their mission is to coordinate, across jurisdictional boundaries, the transportation system that serves their respective metro area. Regional Development Commissions (RDCs) were established to facilitate intergovernmental cooperation and to ensure the coordination of state, federal, and local comprehensive planning and development programs. Transportation is not the sole interest of an RDC, but it is always a critical one.

The MPOs and RDCs are made up of policy bodies that include elected officials and technical committees involving transportation professionals and people with special interests. They operate in the public forum and represent their respective constituencies within the cities and counties in their jurisdiction. The general public also has ready access to the individuals on the policy and technical committees and to the activities of the MPOs and RDCs. Additionally, MPOs have public participation plans and use them when developing their transportation plans and programs. Various other local plans exist and inform Mn/DOT's major system planning documents – the "Statewide Transportation Plan" and our district long-range plans.

Mn/DOT's district long-range plans are the medium by which Mn/DOT's visionary and strategic goals and policies, in addition to current demographic and social trends, are coordinated with regional and local planning documents to create a plan focused on transportation system needs. These needs can be as specific as identifying certain access points that must be closed or reconfigured or as visionary as a commuter-rail transit system. These identified needs are then balanced against projected funding levels to come up with what we call our "unmet needs." These unmet needs identify Minnesota's transportation "deficit"; the ways in which our transportation system will not be able to meet the travel demands of Minnesota's citizens and businesses over the twenty-year planning period.

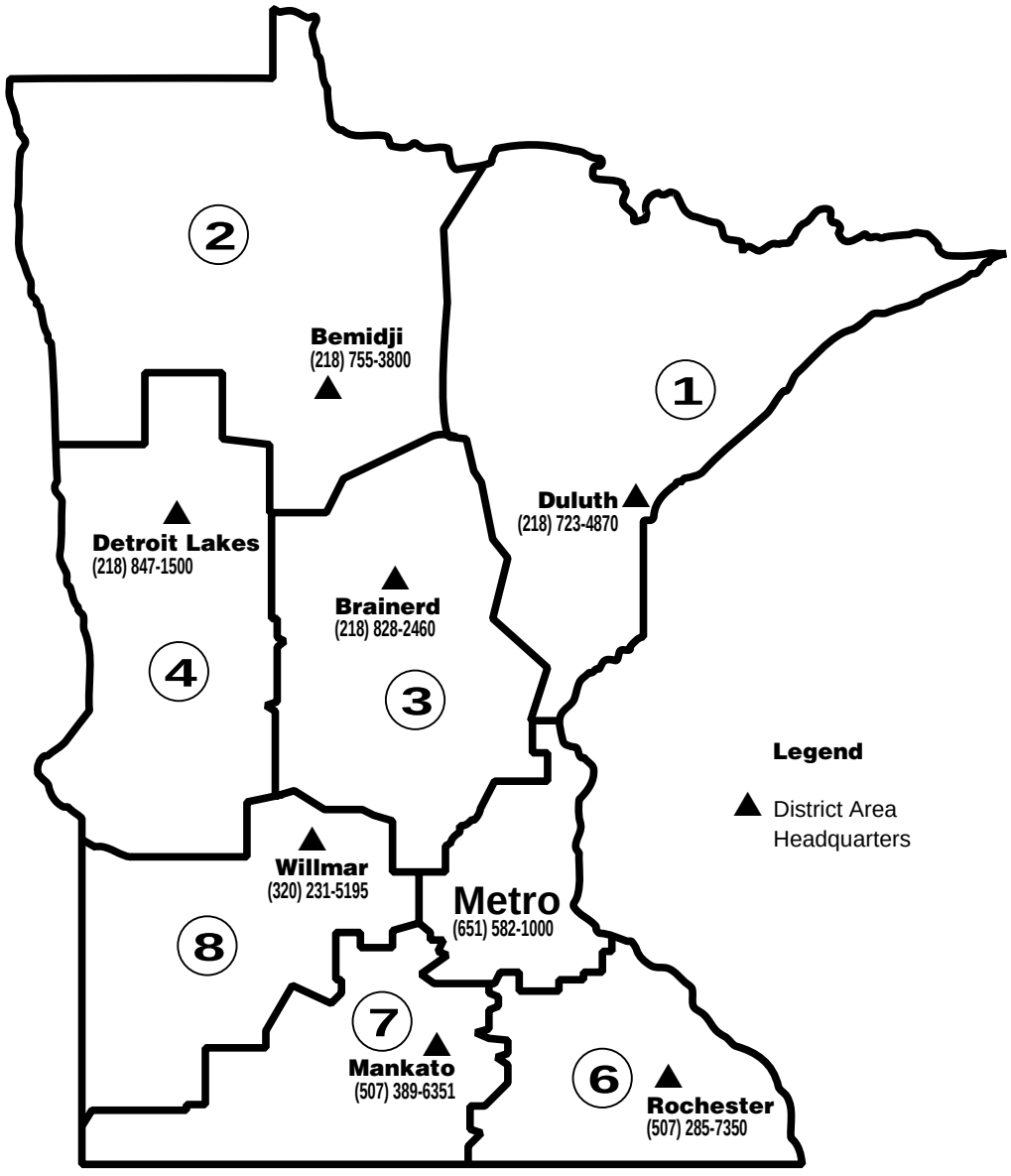
The programming process column in figure 3-1 depicts the planning documents that result from our long-range plans. Here, as in the rest of the chart, the movement is from the more long-range and visionary documents to the specific and constrained. Project studies plans may look at a specific corridor, identifying its function, its shortcomings, and the project solutions that will address the shortcomings. Project work plans are limited to a certain project arising from the needs identified in the planning documents that preceded it. Finally, the STIP serves as the fiscally-constrained document that demonstrates which projects are to be implemented using current revenues.

As depicted in the Planning/Programming Process chart (Figure 3-1), planning in Mn/DOT is an ongoing and ultimately cyclical process. People who want to get involved with any product or step in this process are encouraged to do so. A list of contacts (Figure 3-3) follows for those interested in receiving more information on certain planning activities described above and depicted in Figure 3-1.

| | |
|---|---|
| System Condition<br>Mn/DOT District Planner<br>(see Figure 3-4) | District Long-Range Plans<br>Mn/DOT District Planner<br>(see Figure 3-4) |
| Mn/DOT Strategic Plan<br>Office of Strategic Initiatives<br>(651) 215-1922 | Future Studies<br>Mn/DOT District Planner<br>(see Figure3-4) |
| Statewide Transportation Plan<br>Office of Investment Management<br>(651) 296-8478 | Project Studies Plan<br>Mn/DOT District Planner<br>(see Figure 3-4) |
| Other Plans: MPO plans, RDC Plans, Local Plans<br>Contact Appropriate Agency | Project Work Plan<br>Mn/DOT District Planner<br>(see Figure3-4) |
| | Statewide Transportation Improvement Program<br>Office of Investment Management<br>(651) 296-8478 |

**Figure 3-3**
**Mn/DOT Contacts**

**Figure 3-4**
**Mn/DOT Districts and Area Offices**



# CHAPTER 4

## HEAR EVERY VOICE

## Mn/DOT'S HIGHWAY PROJECT DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

## Public Involvement in Mn/DOT's Project Development Process

Public involvement in project development is the process implemented to obtain public input and participation in the development of Mn/DOT construction projects from the stages of scoping to construction and operation. The key to effective public involvement is to involve people and then to incorporate their input into project decisions.

The project development process actually begins in the system planning phase (described in Chapter 3) with the identification of system deficiencies. System, in this instance, refers to Minnesota's trunk highways and system deficiencies may be related to safety, traffic capacity, highway structure, economic development, or other problems. They may be identified by Mn/DOT district or central office personnel, affected regions, counties, cities, and/or townships as well as individual citizens.

Deficiencies may range from a request to fix a particularly bad "pothole" to a request for a new freeway to serve a developing area. A wide variety of state and federal program categories have evolved to deal with these diverse kinds of improvement needs.

## Project Development Scoping Phase

The project development process begins after early planning studies (depicted in Figure 3-1) have identified a valid need for a project improvement. Pre-program scoping occurs before a project is actually programmed. A project may be initiated by Mn/DOT or by external agents identifying deficiencies or needs to be addressed by Mn/DOT. Projects are then ranked by the ATP (Area Transportation Partnership) or MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) before being incorporated into the "State Transportation Improvement Program."

The project scoping phase is the first step in the project development process. It is undertaken to determine what the project should entail and what potential impacts exist. The level of complexity and need for widespread public involvement depends on what the critical deficiencies are, and the magnitude and potential impacts of the project. The scoping process is tailored to the project, but typical questions to be answered include:

- Which transportation deficiencies need to be addressed?
- What are the parameters of the project?
- What impacts and alternatives should be analyzed?
- What permits and approvals are needed?
- What public and agency coordination is appropriate?

- Early identification of potential Social, Economic or Environmental (SEE) Effects.
- What SEE issues warrant study or may rule out further consideration of certain alternatives?
- What is the appropriate scope of the study?

It is important for the project manager to remember that the public should be involved in answering these questions to the greatest extent practical before detailed plans or proposals have been developed. This consideration may hinge on the complexity of the study. One of the outputs of the scoping process is a determination of the appropriate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) level of action determination. The most complex (and potentially most controversial) projects that significantly affect the environment are required to complete Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) before they can be implemented. The triggering of an EIS process should be a good indication for a project manager of the need for a more intensive effort to involve the public and to develop a formal public involvement plan (discussed in Chapter Two). Another issue to be considered by the project manager is whether the project should follow the "Inter-agency Coordination with Federal Agencies during the FHWA NEPA process." This process establishes concurrence points in the project development process that streamline federal agency reviews and permit activities.

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*Legal Requirement for Public Involvement:*

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For Environmental Impact Statement (Class I) projects, the state mandates that "The Responsible Governing Unit (RGU) shall provide the opportunity for at least one scoping meeting during the scoping period – at least 10 days, but not more than 20 days after the notice of positive declaration is published in the "EQB Monitor." (4410.2100 Subp. 3.B & Subp. 4.A). The "EQB Monitor" is a biweekly publication of the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board that lists descriptions and deadlines for Environmental Assessment Worksheets, Environmental Impact Statements, and other notices.

## Preliminary Design and Environmental Study

The next major phase illustrated in Figure 3-1 is preliminary design and environmental study. The process requires proper sequencing of avoidance, then minimization, then mitigation of environmental impacts. This activity responds to such questions as:

- What are the environmental impacts of the scoped alternatives?
- Which alternative best meets the needs while avoiding/minimizing adverse impacts?
- What can be done to avoid/minimize environmental and community impacts?
- What will the project look like?
- How should it be designed to meet sound engineering requirements?
- Who will be affected by the project?

This activity, and the information imparted to the public, also can take many forms, depending on the type of work and the impacts. It may range from a simple typical cross-section graphic (showing lane widths and number of lanes, shoulder widths, and side slopes) and written documentation in a simple report to a computer-generated project simulation, many hours of meetings, and numerous detailed reports. Again, the types and intensity of public involvement will probably be related to the issues, as well as the complexity of the project and its potential impacts.

The project manager should develop a Public Involvement Plan (PIP) tailored for the project based on the level of action, the issues, and potential impacts (see pages 21-25). This may be quite formal and detailed for major projects and less formal and detailed for preservation projects. However, even for simple projects, thought should be given to reaching the affected public, perhaps by preparing and publishing a newspaper article that contains project details and information on how to contact Mn/DOT personnel. Specific techniques for engaging the public are discussed in Chapter Five.

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*Legal Requirement for Public Involvement:*

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**State:**

- After the Draft EIS (DEIS) is completed, an informational meeting is mandatory - to be held not less than 15 days after the public notice of availability (MEQB Rule 4410.2600 Subp.2).
- For a Supplemental EIS (SEIS), the RGU may hold a public meeting to obtain information. When the Draft Supplemental EIS is completed, the RGU shall hold an informational meeting not less than 10 days after publication in the "EQB Monitor." (MEQB Rule 4410.3000 Subp.5 A & C).
- For an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) or Environmental Assessment (EA), the RGU may hold one or more public meetings to gather comments on the project if necessary.

**Federal:**

- A public hearing must be held or offered for any project:
  1. Involving acquisition of more than minimal amounts of right-of-way.
  2. Involving substantial changes in the layout or functions of connecting roadways or the facility being improved.
  3. Involving a substantial adverse impact on abutting real property.
  4. Involving an important social, economic, environmental, or other effect.
  5. For which the FHWA determines that a public hearing is in the public interest. (23 CFR 771.111 (h) (2) (iii)

- **For Draft EIS.** A Draft EIS requires a public hearing during the circulation period of all Draft EISs. Whenever a public hearing is held, the Draft EIS shall be available at the public hearing and for a minimum of 15 days in advance of the public hearing. The availability of the DEIS shall be mentioned, and public comments be requested, in any public hearing notice and at any public hearing presentation. If a public hearing ... is not held, a notice shall be placed in a newspaper similar to a public hearing notice advising where the Draft EIS is available for review, how copies may be obtained, and where the comments should be sent. 23 CFR 771.123 (h).
- **For Draft EIS.** The "Federal Register" public availability notice ... shall establish a period of not less than 45 days for the return of comments on the DEIS. The notice and the DEIS transmittal letter shall identify where comments should be sent. 23 CFR 771.123 (i).
- **For Final EIS.** The FEIS shall be transmitted to any persons, organizations, or agencies that made substantive comments on the Draft EIS or requested a copy, no later than the time the document is filed with the EPA. In the case of lengthy documents, the agency may provide alternative circulation processes in accordance with 40 CFR 1502.19. The applicant shall also publish a notice of availability in local newspapers and make the Final EIS available ... pursuant to USDOT Order 12372. When filed with the EPA, the Final EIS shall be available for public review at the applicants' offices and at appropriate government offices. A copy should also be made available for public review at institutions such as local libraries and schools, as appropriate. 23 CFR 771.125 (g).
- **For EIS Record of Decision (ROD).** The Administration will complete and sign a Record of Decision (ROD) no later than 30 days after publication of the FEIS notice in the "Federal Register" or 90 days after publication of a notice for the DEIS, whichever is later... 23 CFR 771.127 (a).
- **For an Environmental Assessment.** The EA need not be circulated for comment but the document must be made available for public inspection at the applicants office and at the appropriate Administration field office... Notice of availability of the EA, briefly describing the action and its impacts shall be sent by the applicant to the affected units of federal, state, and local government. Notices shall also be sent to the state intergovernmental review contacts... 23 CFR 771.119 (d).
- **For an Environmental Assessment.** When a public hearing is held ... the EA shall be available at the public hearing and for a minimum of 15 days in advance of the public hearing. The notice of the public hearing shall announce the availability of the EA and where it may be obtained or reviewed. Comments shall be submitted in writing to the applicant or the Administration within 30 days of the availability of the EA unless the Administration determines, for good cause, that a different period is warranted...23 CFR 771.119 (e).

- **For an Environmental Assessment.** When a public hearing is not held, the applicant shall place a notice in a newspaper(s) similar to a public hearing notice and at a similar stage of development of the action, advising the public of the availability of the EA and where information concerning the action may be obtained. The notice shall invite comments from all interested parties. Comments shall be submitted in writing to the applicant or the Administration within 30 days of the publication of the notice unless the Administration determines, for good cause, that a different period is warranted. (23 CFR 771.119) (f).

The following figures depict time lines around notification and public hearing procedures for Environmental Impact Statements and Environmental Assessments illustrating how the federal and state procedures overlap.

**Figure 4-1**
**Environmental Assessment Worksheet Process**

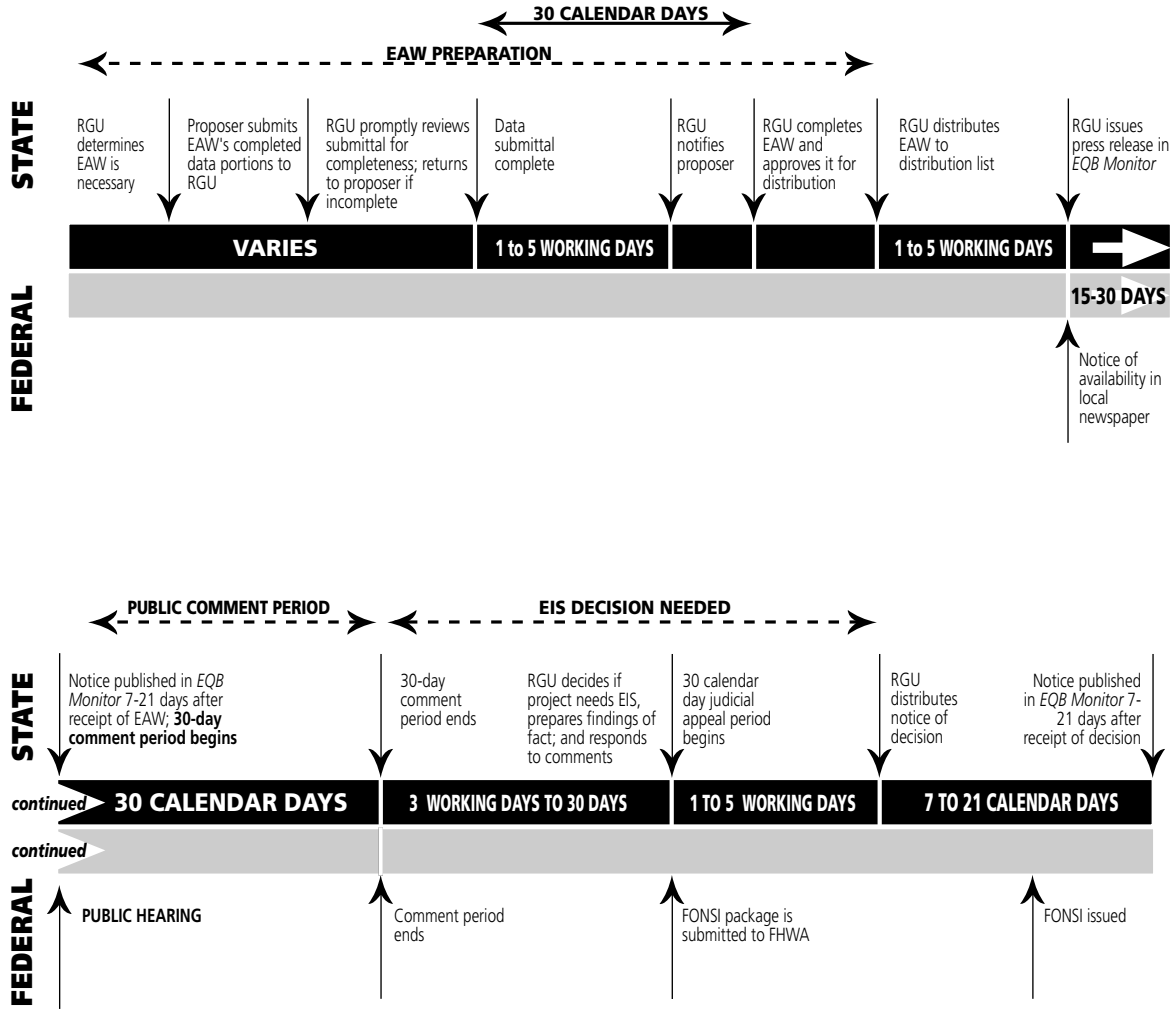
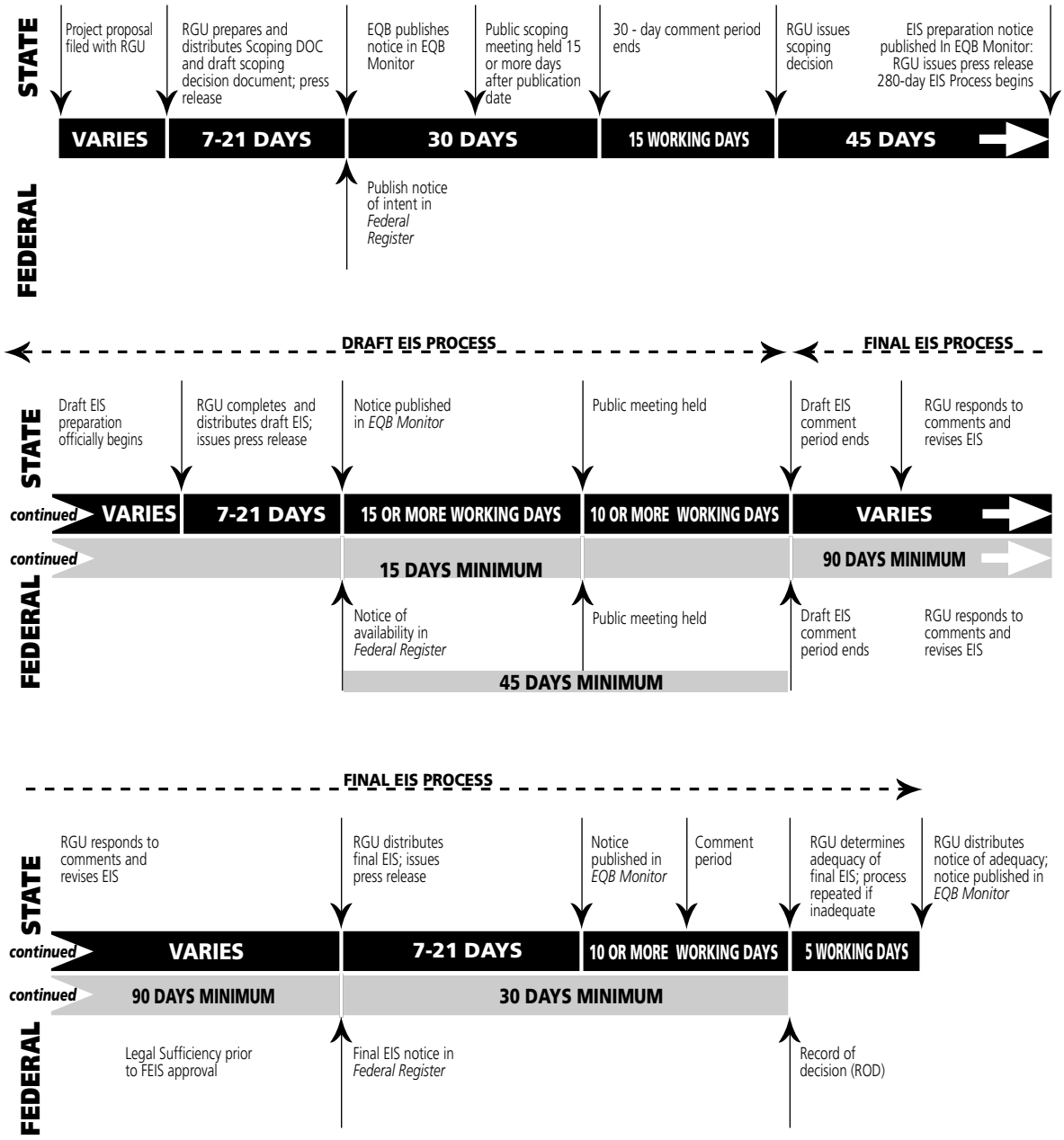


**Figure 4-2**
**EIS Preparation and Review Process**



## Notification Procedures for Public Hearings/Public Meetings

When a public hearing or other required meeting is to be held, a notice shall be published in at least one newspaper having general circulation in the vicinity of the proposed project. A second notice about one week before the public hearing/meeting is also required (if newspaper schedules allow). The notices shall also be published in any newspaper such as foreign language newspapers or minority publications that have a substantial circulation in the project area. The first notice shall be published a minimum of 30 days before the date of the hearing. The timing of additional notices is optional. Alternatively, consideration should be given to purchase of an ad, if the district/division believes the legal notice will not be effective. A paid advertisement should be designed to catch the public's attention and be tailored to the project and its environment. It would be most useful when a legal notice would potentially be "hidden" in a large newspaper in major cities. The paid ads would serve as official notice.

In addition to publishing a formal notice(s) or ad for the hearing or meeting, copies of the notice, ad, or press release or other notification letters should be distributed to appropriate news media and local, state, and federal governmental agencies that are affected by, or involved in, the project. Consideration shall also be given to mailing copies to any agency, local public officials, public advisory groups, or individuals who have requested notice of hearings and to other groups, who by nature of their function, interest, or responsibility, the project manager knows, or believes, might be interested in, or affected by, the undertaking. The district/division, with the assistance of the Office of Technical Support, is responsible for the notification.

Each notice of a public hearing or meeting shall specify the date, time, place, and purpose of the hearing or meeting and shall contain a brief description of the proposal. The notice shall specify that maps, drawings, and other pertinent information, including the DEIS, EA, or other project document (draft Project Memorandum) developed for the proposal, as well as written views received from local, state, and federal agencies, will be available for public inspection and copying. The notice shall specify where this information is available, such as, at the department, district/division office, or at another convenient public building such as the city hall, library, or post office in the vicinity of the proposed project. It is desirable to coordinate document comment periods with public hearings and their comment periods (see time lines). A notice of a public hearing shall indicate, when applicable, that the tentative schedules for right-of-way acquisition and construction will be discussed and shall also indicate that the Department's relocation assistance program will be explained. In addition, items specifically required by federal and/or state agency guidelines will be included in the notice. Currently, these items include identification of significant flood plain encroachments, if applicable, shall be included. The notices for the

public hearing and the availability of the environmental document should also note that one or more alternatives affect wetlands (when applicable). A brief description of how to submit a statement or exhibits at the hearing and the statements will be received by Mn/DOT within 10 (or more) days after the hearing shall be included. This date should be coordinated with the DEIS or EA comment deadlines when applicable.

**Public Hearing Documentation**

A transcript of the oral proceedings of the public hearing shall be made. A copy of the transcript and written statements received shall be made available to the public for inspection and copying. Procedures for reviewing the transcript shall be announced at the public hearing. In addition, copies will be provided to individuals who request such copies as provided for in the Freedom of Information Act. A summary of public hearing proceedings will be included in the Final EIS, or will accompany the request for a finding of no significant impact (FONSI). The transcript together with a Certificate of Compliance Form, (Figure 4-3) copies of, or reference to, material used or presented at the hearing or submitted within the allotted time following the hearing, is forwarded to the FHWA as soon as practicable unless the project is covered by Certification Acceptance procedures. FHWA approval of the FEIS or FONSI constitutes compliance with the public hearing process for Non-Categorical Exclusions. For Categorical Exclusion projects, a separate compliance action by FHWA is not taken.

If significant flood plain encroachments exist, this shall be noted in the public hearing presentation. When wetlands are affected, such effects shall be explained.

**Opportunity For A Public Hearing**

The public hearing requirements (except for Class I actions which require a public hearing) can be satisfied by holding a public hearing, publishing two notices offering the opportunity for a public hearing, and holding a hearing if any written request(s) for such a hearing is received except as discussed below. The procedure for requesting a public hearing shall be explained in the notice. In addition, the notice shall announce the availability of the EA or other project document developed for the project and shall explain how copies may be obtained and where the comments should be submitted. The deadline for submission of such comments and/or a request for a public hearing shall be at least 30 days after the date of publication of the first notice and at least 14 days after the date of publication of the second notice if a second notice was published. If no requests are received in response to a notice within the time specified, Mn/DOT shall certify that fact to the FHWA and indicate that the public hearing requirements have been fulfilled. The revised Certificate of Compliance Form

should be used. If, the project is covered by Certification Acceptance procedures, the Certificate of Compliance does not need to be sent to the FHWA.

When a limited number of requests are received in response to a notice offering the opportunity for a public hearing, appropriate Mn/DOT representatives may meet with those individuals responding. If, following a meeting, the individuals withdraw their requests in writing, Mn/DOT may certify that the public hearing requirements have been satisfied. In certain cases following such a meeting when a limited number of individuals do not, or will not, withdraw their requests and it can be documented that their requests are based on purely personal matters, Mn/DOT shall prepare a written explanation of the situation and may certify to the FHWA (for federally funded projects) that a public hearing would not be in the overall public interest. With FHWA concurrence, the public hearing requirements may be waived.

**Figure 4-3**
**Certificate of Compliance Form**

STATE OF MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

___. . . . . OPPORTUNITY FOR A PUBLIC HEARING . . . . .
___. . . . . A PUBLIC HEARING . . . . .
. . . . . CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE . . . . .

In conformance with the requirements of SECTION 128, TITLE 23, UNITED STATES CODE, the undersigned does hereby certify that

___ the public has been afforded an opportunity for a public hearing
___ a public hearing was held

to consider the indicated stages of the development of the project described below, and that full consideration has been given to the social and economic effects of the project, its impact on the environment, and its consistency with the goals and objectives of such urban planning as has been promulgated by the community.

The public was advised of the

___ objectives of such a hearing, the procedures for requesting a hearing, and the deadline for the submission of such a request
___ Time, place, and objectives of the hearing

by notices published in news media having a general circulation within the area of said project. Affidavit(s) of such publication is (are) enclosed herewith.

MINNESOTA PROJECT NO. _____ STATE PROJECT NO._____

TRUNK HIGHWAY NO. _____ COUNTY STATE AID HIGHWAY NO. _____

Being that section of highway between _____

_____
_____
_____County, the State of Minnesota.

___ TYPE OF HEARING FOR WHICH OPPORTUNITY WAS AFFORDED[1]
___ TYPE OF HEARING HELD[1]
(State of Development)

___ LOCATION PUBLIC HEARING, whereat the route location was considered.
___ DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING, whereat the major design features were considered.
___ COMBINED LOCATION AND DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING, whereat both the route loaction and the major design features were considered.

___ The deadline date for the submission of a request for a hearing was _____ 19___
___ The hearing was held on _____ 19___ in _____ Minn.

Signed _____ this _____ day of _____ 19___
District/Division Engineer, Mn/DOT Distr/Division._____

County Engineer, _____ County

## Detail Design and Right-of-Way Acquisition

The next major phase is detail design and right-of-way (R/W) Acquisition. Questions to be addressed in this project phase include:

- How can the selected alternative be designed to minimize cost, mitigate impacts, and fit the natural and social context?
- What are the detailed effects?
- What detailed mitigation is possible?
- Can impacts be avoided through detail design measures and techniques?
- What are the land requirements (if any?)

Products of the final design and R/W acquisition phase include:

- Construction plans, specifications, and estimates (PS&E)
- R/W maps and documents.
- Permits and approvals.
- Detailed mitigation.
- Design alternatives (for major design option chosen).
- Alternative traffic handling techniques.
- Alternative design treatments.

As always, seeking public involvement should be done as appropriate based on the complexity and the circumstances of the particular project.

## Construction and Operation

At this point, there will be a very limited ability for public participation to affect the overall outcome of a project due to the nature of Mn/DOT's contracting process. Products of public involvement in this phase may include:

- Alternative construction options to lessen impacts, and,
- Alternative operating strategies.

The formal project development process actually concludes when project construction begins. Mn/DOT construction personnel then supervise construction by a private contractor to ensure that the project is built according to earlier project plans and commitments. While the formal project development process ends with the beginning of construction, there may be some continuing coordination on complex jobs. Operations activities (paint striping, lighting, mowing, plowing, etc.) take place after construction. Again, there may be some commitments made during the project development process, such as monitoring traffic for air pollution or vehicle-type enforcement, which will necessitate continuing coordination. This cyclical process repeats itself as the various facilities age and new needs arise for project improvement.

# CHAPTER 5

# HEAR EVERY VOICE

# PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES

# Public Involvement Techniques

This chapter of *Hear Every Voice* includes descriptions of various public involvement techniques as well as case studies of how a public involvement program has worked within the scope of a plan or project. The discussion of techniques also details their applicability under different circumstances, e.g., long-range plans, corridor studies, etc. These techniques are not meant to exhaustively explore all the different types of citizen involvement strategies, but merely to give an overview of how they have been applied in Minnesota and to refer you to the sources that will be able to provide you with a more in-depth understanding. One excellent source for this knowledge is published by the U.S. Department of Transportation, "Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision-making." A copy of this report is included in the Appendix to this document.

Some key considerations must be kept in mind when you are choosing specific techniques and activities from your public involvement "tool box." In planning your outreach activities consider the following:

- Who are you trying to reach?
- What message or information do you want to convey or receive?
- How much will it cost?
- Which combination of techniques (and how many) is most appropriate?
- How easy or difficult is it to implement?
- How does it relate to your objectives?

Although all of the above considerations are important to keep in mind, the last is of special significance. Often people reach into their toolbox to retrieve the public involvement technique perceived as the most current or trendy or to use the technique with which they feel most comfortable. This behavior is not necessarily problematic, as long as the techniques you will be using are related to the objectives you have identified. Objectives may range from building credibility for your agency to involving as diverse an array of stakeholders as possible, all aimed at achieving the overall objective of making the best transportation decisions possible.

Two public involvement methods that Mn/DOT has used warrant some discussion here. They are more than techniques and closer to a systematic approach for engaging the public. Some of the philosophies that inform these methods serve to inspire public involvement efforts throughout the department.

## Transportation Action Model

The Transportation Action Model (TAM), initiated and designed by a national consortium led by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is specifically designed for communities of approximately 5,000 population, and would probably not be effective in areas greater than 10,000 population. The TAM seeks to involve citizens at a grassroots level to plan for the future of their community. It was created with two guiding principles. First, sound transportation systems and the decisions behind them are critical to the social and economic well-being of communities. Second, informed community participation creates better transportation decisions.

The TAM is a highly-structured, 21-week process that includes creating public dialogue, identifying transportation issues, and developing solutions. Successful completion of the program should provide a blueprint for local action. Although it is specifically designed to address transportation problems, it intends to take a more integrated approach to identifying a community's needs and vision for its future.

More information on the Transportation Action Model can be obtained by contacting the Office of Advanced Transportation Systems (651) 296-5269, and by referring to case study #21 that is included in Chapter 6 of this guide.

## Systematic Development of Informed Consent

Mn/DOT has been using the Systematic Development of Informed Consent (SDIC) process, developed by Hans and Annemarie Bleiker of the Institute for Participatory Management and Planning, to comprehensively guide public involvement planning (see Case Study #22, describing the Metro Division's Transportation System Plan.) SDIC seeks to 1) establish the public agency's legitimate role by casting its program as one aimed at problem-solving and, 2) to communicate to the public the serious nature of the problem the agency is attempting to address, e.g., that if the problem is not addressed there will be profound impacts on someone's quality of life. The premise of the SDIC process is that accomplishing these two objectives, in combination with a thorough public involvement process, will allow an agency to achieve informed consent. Informed consent is usually far short of unanimous support or consensus. It is, however, enough of an agreement so that each interest or individual with the capability of vetoing a proposed course of action is persuaded that they can live with its consequences.

The SDIC process identifies 15 citizen participation objectives aimed at developing informed consent. They are grouped into three categories: Responsibility Objectives, Responsiveness Objectives, and Effectiveness Objectives. It is critical to an effectively designed and administered public involvement program to ensure that the techniques and methods of involvement are connected to the objective that needs to be achieved.

More information about the SDIC process can be obtained by contacting the Institute for Participatory Management and Planning, P.O. Box 1937, Monterey, CA 93942. Mn/DOT personnel can check with their employee development specialist to inquire about the availability of training.

## Mn/DOT Experience in Public Involvement

The following matrices and case studies are intended for practical application by Mn/DOT project managers and planners developing public involvement plans and conducting outreach activities.

The first table (Figure 5-1) is intended to orient the reader through the rest of the chapter. Overall public involvement objectives are listed in the first column, followed by general methods of involvement, and then the specific techniques. The final two columns list the corresponding Mn/DOT technique templates that follow and refer the practitioner to the USDOT guide to public involvement (Appendix A) for more detailed information on the specific technique.

Public involvement techniques and their applicability to steps in the planning process are detailed in Figure 5-2, techniques related to project development are found in Figure 5-3. The final figure (Figure 5-4) indicates the intensity of resources, whether time, money, or staff, required to deploy the specific technique.

**Figure 5-1**

**Public Involvement: Mn/DOT Specific Experience**

| P. I. Objective | General Method | Specific Technique | Technique # | See Page USDOT Guide (Appendix A) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **INFORM** | **Committees** | Civic Advisory Committees (Advise) | 1,2 | 5 |
| | | Citizens on Decision Policy Bodies (Recommend) | | 9 |
| | | Collaborative Task Forces (Problem Solve) | | 13 |
| | **Communication** | Mailing Lists | | 33 |
| | | Public Information Materials | 3 | 39 |
| | | Key Person Interviews | | 47 |
| | | Briefings | 4,5 | 53 |
| | | Video Techniques | | 57 |
| | | Telephone Techniques | | 61 |
| | | Media Strategies | 6,7 | 65 |
| | | Speakers Bureau & P.I. Volunteers | | 69 |
| **INVOLVE** | **Meetings** | Public Meetings/Hearings (Formal) | | 81 |
| | | Open Forums/Open Houses | 8,9,10,11,12 | 85 |
| | | Conferences/Workshops/Retreats | | 91 |
| | **Techniques** | Brainstorming | | 99 |
| | | Charrettes | | 103 |
| | | Visioning | 13 | 107 |
| | | Small Group Techniques | 14,15,16 | 111 |
| **FEEDBACK** | **Establishing Places** | On-Line Services | | 125 |
| | | Hotlines | | 131 |
| | | Drop-In Centers | | 135 |
| | **Designing Programs** | Focus Groups | 17 | 143 |
| | | Public Opinion Surveys | | 147 |
| | | Facilitation | | 151 |
| | | Negotiation & Mediation | | 155 |
| **PARTICIPATION** | **Special Techniques** | Transportation Fairs | | 169 |
| | | Games & Contests | | 173 |
| | | Improving Meeting Attendance | | 183 |
| | | Role Playing | | 189 |
| | | Site Visits | | 193 |
| | | Non-Traditional Meeting Places & Events | | 197 |
| | | Interactive Television | | 205 |
| | | Interactive Video Displays & Kiosks | 18 | 209 |
| | | Computer Presentations & Simulations | 19 | 213 |
| | | Teleconferencing | | 219 |

**Figure 5-2**
**Public Involvement Techniques in the Planning Process**

KEY

● Always Appropriate ◗ Sometimes Appropriate ❍ Not Very Appropriate

| Tool/Technique | Plan Process | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total Planning Process | Developing Values, Goals & Objectives | Choosing Alternatives | Plan Implementation | Feedback-Modification | Case Study |
| Civic Advisory Committee (Advise) | | ● | ● | ❍ | ❍ | |
| Citizens on Decision & Policy Bodies (Recommend) | | ❍ | ❍ | ● | ❍ | |
| Collaborative Task Force (Problem Solve) | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| Mailing Lists | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | 21 |
| Public Information Materials | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| Key Person Interviews | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| Briefings | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| Video Techniques | | ◗ | ● | ◗ | ❍ | |
| Telephone Techniques | | ◗ | | ◗ | ◗ | |
| Media Strategies | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | 21 |
| Speakers Bureau & P.I. Volunteers | | ● | | ◗ | ❍ | |
| Public Meetings/Hearings (Formal) | | ❍ | ● | ❍ | ❍ | 21 |
| Open Forum/Open Houses | | ◗ | ● | ❍ | ◗ | |
| Conferences, Workshops & Retreats | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| Brainstorming | | ● | | ❍ | ❍ | |
| Charrettes | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| Visioning | | ● | ● | ❍ | ❍ | 13 |
| Small Group Techniques | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | 14, 15 |
| On-line Services | | ● | | ◗ | ◗ | |
| Hotlines | | ◗ | ● | ◗ | ● | |
| Drop-in Centers | | ◗ | ● | ❍ | ❍ | |
| Focus Groups | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | 17 |
| Public Opinion Surveys | | ● | ● | ❍ | ● | |
| Facilitation | | ❍ | ● | ❍ | ❍ | 21 |
| Negotiation & Mediation | | ❍ | ❍ | ● | ❍ | |
| Transportation Fairs | | ◗ | ● | ❍ | ❍ | |
| Games & Contests | | ❍ | ● | ❍ | ❍ | |
| Improving Meeting Attendance | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| Role Playing | | ❍ | | ❍ | ❍ | |
| Site Visits | | ◗ | ● | ● | ❍ | |
| Non-Traditional Meeting Places & Events | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| Interactive Television | | ◗ | ● | ❍ | ❍ | |
| Interactive Video Displays & Kiosks | | ◗ | ● | ❍ | ◗ | 18 |
| Computer Presentations & Simulations | | ◗ | ● | ● | ❍ | |
| Teleconferencing | | ❍ | ◗ | ❍ | ◗ | |

**Figure 5-3**
**Public Involvement Techniques in the Project Development Process**

KEY

● Always Appropriate ◗ Sometimes Appropriate ○ Not Very Appropriate

# Project Development

| Tool/Technique | Planning | Scoping | Pre-Design & Env. Study | Detail Design & R/W Acq. | Construction & Operation | Requires Facility | Requires Ext. Expert | Technique /Case Study |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Civic Advisory Committee (Advise) | | | ◗ | ● | | ◗ | | 1 |
| Citizens on Decision & Policy Bodies (Recommend) | | | ◗ | | | ◗ | | 2, 20 |
| Collaborative Task Force (Problem Solve) | | | ◗ | | | ◗ | | |
| Mailing Lists | ● | ● | ◗ | | ● | | | |
| Public Information Materials | | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ◗ | 3 |
| Key Person Interviews | | ● | | | | | | |
| Briefings | | | ● | ● | ● | | | 4, 5 |
| Video Techniques | | ● | ◗ | | | | ◗ | |
| Telephone Techniques | | | ○ | | | ◗ | | |
| Media Strategies | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | 6, 7 |
| Speakers Bureau & P.I. Volunteers | ● | ● | ◗ | | | | | |
| Public Meetings/Hearings | | ● | ◗ | | | | | 20 |
| Open Forum Hearings /Open Houses | | ● | ● | | | ● | | 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 |
| Conferences, Workshops & Retreats | ● | | ◗ | | | ● | | |
| Brainstorming | ● | ● | | | | | | |
| Charrettes | | | ◗ | ● | | | | |
| Visioning | ● | | ◗ | | | | | |
| Small Group Techniques | | | ◗ | | | | | 16 |
| On-line Services | | | ◗ | | | | | |
| Hotlines | | | ◗ | | | ◗ | | |
| Drop-in Centers | | | ◗ | | | ◗ | | |
| Focus Groups | ● | | ○ | | | ◗ | ◗ | |
| Public Opinion Surveys | ● | | ◗ | | | | | |
| Facilitation | ● | ● | ◗ | | | | | |
| Negotiation & Mediation | | | ◗ | ● | | | ● | |
| Transportation Fairs | ● | | ◗ | | | ● | | |
| Games & Contests | ● | ● | | | | ◗ | | |
| Role Playing | | ◗ | ◗ | | | | | |
| Site Visits | ● | ● | ◗ | ● | | | | |
| Interactive Television | | | ◗ | | | ● | ◗ | |
| Interactive Video Displays & Kiosks | | | ◗ | | | ● | ◗ | |
| Computer Presentations & Simulations | ● | ● | ◗ | ● | | | ◗ | 19 |
| Teleconferencing | ● | ● | ● | ◗ | | ● | | |

KEY

● Very Intensive ◗ Moderately Intensive ❍ Less Intensive

# Resources Required

| Tool/Technique | Use of Time Resources | Use of Money Resources | Use of Staff Resources |
|---|---|---|---|
| Civic Advisory Committee (Advise) | ❍ | ● | ● |
| Citizens on Decision & Policy Bodies (Recommend) | ◗ | ❍ | ◗ |
| Collaborative Task Force (Problem Solve) | ◗ | | ◗ |
| Mailing Lists | ❍ | ◗ | ◗ |
| Public Information Materials | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Key Person Interviews | ❍ | | ● |
| Briefings | ❍ | | ● |
| Video Techniques | ◗ | ● | |
| Telephone Techniques | ❍ | | ● |
| Media Strategies | ◗ | | ◗ |
| Speakers Bureau & P.I. Volunteers | ◗ | | ◗ |
| Public Meetings/Hearings (Formal) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Open Forum/Open Houses | ❍ | ❍ | ◗ |
| Conferences, Workshops & Retreats | ❍ | ❍ | ◗ |
| Brainstorming | ❍ | ◗ | ◗ |
| Charrettes | ❍ | ◗ | ◗ |
| Visioning | ❍ | ◗ | ◗ |
| Small Group Techniques | | | ◗ |
| On-line Services | ❍ | ❍ | ◗ |
| Hotlines | ❍ | ❍ | ◗ |
| Drop-in Centers | ❍ | ◗ | ◗ |
| Focus Groups | ◗ | ◗ | ◗ |
| Public Opinion Surveys | ◗ | ◗ | ● |
| Facilitation | ◗ | ❍ | ◗ |
| Negotiation & Mediation | ● | ● | ◗ |
| Transportation Fairs | ◗ | ◗ | ◗ |
| Games & Contests | ❍ | ◗ | ❍ |
| Improving Meeting Attendance | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Role Playing | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Site Visits | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Non-Traditional Meeting Places & Events | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Interactive Television | ❍ | ● | ◗ |
| Interactive Video Displays & Kiosks | ◗ | ● | ◗ |
| Computer Presentations & Simulations | ◗ | ● | ◗ |
| Teleconferencing | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

**Figure 5-4**
**Public Involvement Techniques and Resource Use**

Public Involvement Technique Template

# 1
# Inform – Civic Advisory Committee

*TECHNIQUE:*

**Non-Traditional Transportation Stakeholders Committee (for Mn/DOT's 1-35E Bridge Project)**

*BRIEF DESCRIPTION:*

Mn/DOT's Metro Division formed the Non-traditional Transportation Stakeholders (NTTS) Committee to foster public involvement in transportation decisions that will affect the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Initially, this committee will address construction of Bridge #9330 on I-35E between Shepard Road and Trunk Highway 13 in St. Paul, Lilydale, and Mendota Heights.

The non-traditional customers will represent communities of diverse ethnic, racial, and income backgrounds; the disabled and those who rely on transit for mobility; those who commute singly or in groups; those concerned with the environmental impacts of transportation decisions; pedestrians and bicyclists; emergency responders; truckers, shippers, and carriers; and local business people. Committee members will be nominated by selected groups or individuals working with each identified community. The committee members are expected to be prepared to share information on the communities they represent, to attend two to four meetings in the coming year, and to participate in an evaluation of the committee's process at the end of the year. The final phase of the NTTS initiative will be to survey participants to determine how they and the communities they represent have responded to their inclusion in the transportation decision-making process.

**REFERENCE:**

Mn/DOT's "Non-Traditional Stakeholder Dialogue/Project" Final Report.

*WHY DID YOU USE THIS TECHNIQUE?*

To seek involvement from a broad group of stakeholders traditionally not involved in Mn/DOT's project development processes, thereby refining the project and receiving community consent. To provide a broad-based, segmented forum to enable everyone to reach an understanding of the issues involved in this specific project.

## USEFULNESS

**FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:**

**RATE 1 - 10**
*(10 is highest level of usefulness)*

**LONG-RANGE (20 YEAR) PLANNING - - - - - - 10**

**CORRIDOR STUDIES - - - - - - - 10**

**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT - - 10**

**PROGRAMMING - - 5**

**CONSTRUCTION - - 3**

*HOW DID THIS TECHNIQUE CONTRIBUTE TO THE DECISION OR PROJECT OUTCOME?*

As of this writing, the committee has just begun their work and the project is in the initial stages of development. The final phase of the NTTS initiative will be to survey participants to determine how they and the communities they represent have responded to their inclusion in the transportation decision-making process. It has become evident that this formalized manner of receiving input from a wide variety of stakeholders enables a greater mutual understanding of transportation issues to be aired. A key is that transportation needs are being articulated by actual stakeholders rather than solely by Mn/DOT.

*WHAT (IF ANY) WERE THE DRAWBACKS OF USING THIS TECHNIQUE?*

None.

*WHAT (IF ANYTHING) WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?*

Improve the initial contact with selected entities by personalizing letters and by following-up with a phone call.

*CONTACT PERSON(S):*


Names: Mukhtar Thakur, Larry Philipp, Candyce Clayton
Address: Mn/DOT Metro Division
1500 W. County Rd. B2,
Roseville, MN 55113
Telephone: (651) 582-1357, (651) 582-1297, (651) 582-1324
Fax: (651) 582-1308

# 2
# Inform – Civic Advisory Committee

*TECHNIQUE:*

**Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Public Advisory Committee (PAC)**

*BRIEF DESCRIPTION:*

Two committees, the TAC and the PAC, gave direction and input throughout the Trunk Highway 14 corridor study. The TAC is made up of agency staff (county, city, and Mn/DOT engineers, and other agency staff, including the Department of Natural Resources). The PAC was comprised of elected officials, citizens, residents, farmers, and business persons.

**REFERENCE:**
SDIC book "Citizen Participation Handbook for Public Officials" 1995

*WHY DID YOU USE THIS TECHNIQUE?*

- Educates stakeholders/community leaders of the project development process;
- Promotes a two-way exchange of information about the affected area;
- Develops understanding of decisions; and,
- Makes committee members responsible for sharing the study information with whom they represent.

*HOW DID THIS TECHNIQUE CONTRIBUTE TO THE DECISION OR PROJECT OUTCOME?*

TAC and PAC members listened to presentations on alignments as alternatives evolved and were evaluated, and they provided input on ways to refine the alternatives. Many decisions had to be made throughout the process. This technique provided a constant flow of communication at key points. Advisory committees were used to test the information before it was provided to the general public.

*WHAT (IF ANY) WERE THE DRAWBACKS OF USING THIS TECHNIQUE?*

Attendance was critical, otherwise it could contribute to a breakdown in communication. The PAC did not turn anyone away and the group grew to an unmanageable size. Some of the media found out about and covered the presentations

to the PAC and TAC at times. Therefore, portions of the corridor got information that other portions didn't.

**USEFULNESS**
**FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:**

**RATE 1 - 10**
*(10 is highest level of usefulness)*

**LONG-RANGE (20 YEAR) PLANNING - - - - - - 10**

**CORRIDOR STUDIES - - - - - - - 10**

**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT - - 10**

**PROGRAMMING - - 5**

**CONSTRUCTION - - 3**

*WHAT (IF ANYTHING) WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?*

Get appropriate representation at the beginning and try not to add people.

*CONTACT PERSON(S):*


Name: Lisa Bigham, Project Manager &
Rebecca Arndt, Public Affairs Coordinator
Address: Mn/DOT District 7
501 S. Victory Dr.
P.O. Box 4039
Mankato, MN 56001
Telephone: (507) 389-6351
Fax: (507) 389-6281

# 3
# Inform – Public Information Materials

*TECHNIQUE:*

**Newsletters**

*BRIEF DESCRIPTION:*

As part of the public involvement program for the Trunk Highway 14 Corridor Study, we published newsletters at key points in the development process that included announcements of public meetings, decisions on scoping and alignments, clarification of controversial issues, and updates on the progress of the study. The mailing list was generated from an initial traffic survey, landowners in the corridor, attendance at meetings, and by request.

*WHY DID YOU USE THIS TECHNIQUE?*

It was an effective way to keep interested citizens informed about the study.

*HOW DID THIS TECHNIQUE CONTRIBUTE TO THE DECISION OR PROJECT OUTCOME?*

Informed citizens were provided current information and opportunities to express their interests or concerns. The newsletter always included information on who to contact for more information and announced upcoming meetings.

*WHAT (IF ANY) WERE THE DRAWBACKS OF USING THIS TECHNIQUE?*

Newsletters are only one-way communication unless the reader wrote to us, called, or attended the public meetings that were announced. Also, one cannot know if people read or understand the information. Management of the mailing list was cumbersome (1,500).

*WHAT (IF ANYTHING) WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?*

Consistency of newsletter mailings is important, otherwise people are uncertain that they are receiving all of the necessary information. We sent them at key points without regard to the time lapses in between announcements.

## *USEFULNESS*

**FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:**

**RATE 1 - 10**
*(10 is highest level of usefulness)*

**LONG-RANGE (20 YEAR) PLANNING - - - - - - 10**

**CORRIDOR STUDIES - - - - - - - 10**

**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT - - - 5**

**PROGRAMMING - - 7**

**CONSTRUCTION - - 5**

*CONTACT PERSON(S):*


Name: Lisa Bigham, Project Manager &
Rebecca Arndt, Public Affairs Coordinator
Address: Mn/DOT District 7
501 S. Victory Dr.
P.O. Box 4039
Mankato, MN 56001
Telephone: (507) 389-6351
Fax: (507) 389-6281

Public Involvement

Technique Template

# 4
# Inform – Briefings

*TECHNIQUE:*

**Area-or Issue-Specific Public Meetings.**

*BRIEF DESCRIPTION:*

Meetings were held to discuss design options that affected specific geographical areas. Advertisements for the meeting were by direct mail. Easily understandable text and graphics to discuss the specific project issue were provided in the mailing so people had a clear understanding. Contact persons were provided (state and city) so people could get additional information or provide input before the meeting. Meeting format can be either open house, traditional, or a combination of the two. The overall project must be discussed at the beginning of each meeting to provide a framework for the more focused discussion.

*WHY DID YOU USE THIS TECHNIQUE?*

Focused meetings were needed to get input on design options that directly affected small geographic areas, as opposed to the overall project area. People also appeared more interested in how a project directly affected their immediate area and less interested in the overall corridor issues.

*HOW DID THIS TECHNIQUE CONTRIBUTE TO THE DECISION OR PROJECT OUTCOME?*

By focusing discussion on a particular area of the project, issues that were important to those most affected by a particular aspect of a project could be discussed, usually in relatively smaller groups or sometimes individually. This forum provided the public with a good understanding of the issue(s) most important to them and gave the project manager the information needed to make informed project decisions.

## USEFULNESS

**FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:**

**RATE 1 - 10**
*(10 is highest level of usefulness)*

**LONG-RANGE (20 YEAR) PLANNING - - - - - - 10**

**CORRIDOR STUDIES - - - - - - - 10**

**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT - - 10**

**PROGRAMMING - 10**

**CONSTRUCTION - - 10**

*WHAT (IF ANY) WERE THE DRAWBACKS OF USING THIS TECHNIQUE?*

Depending on the level of controversy surrounding the overall project, it may be difficult to focus the meeting. Overall, more public meetings are needed for a project if you try to work with the public in these smaller forums. However, it did seem to be a much more effective way of dealing with the public and may have saved time in the long run.

*WHAT (IF ANYTHING) WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?*

These meetings seem to take more effort and longer to set-up then more general meetings so additional lead time should be made available. Also, you may want to have a lay person review any materials before they are sent out to see if they can understand them. I struggled with trying to make things simple enough for a lay person to understand yet detailed enough to provide the public with good information.

*CONTACT PERSON(S):*


Name: Adam Josephson, Project Manager
Address: Mn/DOT Metro Division
1500 W. County Rd. B-2
Roseville, MN 55113
Telephone: (651) 582-1320
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Public Involvement

Technique Template

# 5
# Inform – Briefings

*TECHNIQUE:*

**Group Presentations to Interested Parties About the Corridor Study.**

*BRIEF DESCRIPTION:*

Upon request, presentations were given to city councils, chambers of commerce, and civic clubs.

*WHY DID YOU USE THIS TECHNIQUE?*

It was an opportunity to share and receive information about the progress of the study.

*HOW DID THIS TECHNIQUE CONTRIBUTE TO THE DECISION OR PROJECT OUTCOME?*

We received some key information and triggered some important future discussions in affected communities.

*WHAT (IF ANY) WERE THE DRAWBACKS OF USING THIS TECHNIQUE?*

This technique is dependent on a request from the interested party. Therefore, only those very interested or those with a special interest make the request.

*WHAT (IF ANYTHING) WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?*

We would have publicly marketed the availability of Mn/DOT representatives to give a presentation to interested groups.

## *USEFULNESS*

**FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:**

**RATE 1 - 10**
*(10 is highest level of usefulness)*

**LONG-RANGE (20 YEAR) PLANNING - - - - - - 10**

**CORRIDOR STUDIES - - - - - - - 10**

**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT - - 10**

**PROGRAMMING - 10**

**CONSTRUCTION - - 10**

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# 6
# Inform – Media Strategies

*TECHNIQUE:*

**Monitoring the Media**

*BRIEF DESCRIPTION:*

Subscribe to and read the newspapers published in the affected communities

*WHY DID YOU USE THIS TECHNIQUE?*

The reason to use this technique is two-fold. By reading the area papers you can find out what information you provided was shared and in what context (e.g., accuracy and whether it was accepted). You can also find out what other issues the community is dealing with and potential developments that would affect the corridor decisions. This is critical in a long-term study such as Trunk Highway 14.

*HOW DID THIS TECHNIQUE CONTRIBUTE TO THE DECISION OR PROJECT OUTCOME?*

Mn/DOT was kept informed of the new industries and developments, such as a public golf course, by reviewing the papers. Letters to the editor also gave Mn/DOT a feel for the public sentiment towards an alternative route.

*WHAT (IF ANY) WERE THE DRAWBACKS OF USING THIS TECHNIQUE?*

None. This is valuable information for very little cost and time.

*WHAT (IF ANYTHING) WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?*

Nothing.

## *USEFULNESS*

**FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:**

**RATE 1 - 10**
*(10 is highest level of usefulness)*

**LONG-RANGE (20 YEAR) PLANNING - - - - - - 5**

**CORRIDOR STUDIES - - - - - - - 10**

**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT - - 10**

**PROGRAMMING - 10**

**CONSTRUCTION- - 10**

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# 7
# Inform – Media Strategies

*TECHNIQUE:*

**Press Conference**

*BRIEF DESCRIPTION:*

The Trunk Highway 14 corridor study was announced by holding a press conference in a central location. This was prior to hiring the design consultant. We described the study termini, objectives, cost, and timeframe.

*WHY DID YOU USE THIS TECHNIQUE?*

It was the most effective way to reach all of the communities and residences along the corridor and it highlighted the importance of the study. It was easy for the media to ask questions and verify that they understood the announcement. Media unable to attend were sent press kits. It was a joint press conference between Districts 6 and 7.

*HOW DID THIS TECHNIQUE CONTRIBUTE TO THE DECISION OR PROJECT OUTCOME?*

It provided an initial awareness that the study was beginning. Anyone planning development, or with other interests, along Trunk Highway 14 would know to contact us. The need for an improvement to T.H. 14 had been realized for some time, so this was good news.

*WHAT (IF ANY) WERE THE DRAWBACKS OF USING THIS TECHNIQUE?*

It was only one-way communication with the public. Not everyone reads the newspaper, and television and radio coverage was limited.

*WHAT (IF ANYTHING) WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?*

Timing is important. You must be mindful of the need to work with media deadlines, especially television.

## *USEFULNESS*

**FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:**

**RATE 1 - 10**
*(10 is highest level of usefulness)*

**LONG-RANGE (20 YEAR) PLANNING - - - - - - 10**

**CORRIDOR STUDIES - - - - - - - 10**

**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT - - 10**

**PROGRAMMING - 10**

**CONSTRUCTION - 10**

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Public Involvement
Technique Template

# 8
# Involve – Open Forums/Open Houses

*TECHNIQUE:*

**Combination Open House and Formal Public Hearing**

*BRIEF DESCRIPTION:*

An open house with formal presentations and formal testimony were used for the corridor study. The public hearing was held at a centrally located high school. The schedule was as follows:

Open House in Commons Area 4:30-8 p.m.:

- Project personnel
- Right-of-way and relocation personnel
  (coffee and cookies were available)
  (project handouts were available)
- Alternative layouts and visual images
- Court reporter to take comments

Public Hearing in Little Theater

- Presentation 1: 5-5:30 p.m. — Testimony (officials, agencies, public) 5:30-6:30 p.m.
- Presentation 2: 7-7:30 p.m. — Testimony (officials, agencies, public) 7:30p.m. until all comments are received

**REFERENCE:**
HPDP for what is required.

*WHY DID YOU USE THIS TECHNIQUE?*

- Large numbers of people were anticipated;
- Needed to share information with the public as well as receive their comments; and,
- The public hearing is a legal requirement for an EIS type project. Different types of hearing settings can be used and this technique was most appropriate.

## USEFULNESS

**FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:**

**RATE 1 - 10**
*(10 is highest level of usefulness)*

**LONG-RANGE (20 YEAR) PLANNING- - - - - - 10**

**CORRIDOR STUDIES - - - - - - - 10**

**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT - - 10**

**PROGRAMMING - - 3**

**CONSTRUCTION - - 1**

*HOW DID THIS TECHNIQUE CONTRIBUTE TO THE DECISION OR PROJECT OUTCOME?*

An alignment decision would be made based on the information in the Draft EIS and public comment.

*WHAT (IF ANY) WERE THE DRAWBACKS OF USING THIS TECHNIQUE?*

- The formal presentation and testimony is uncomfortable for some people;
- Visual aids must be clear and understandable;
- Can be difficult to talk one-on-one with everyone at the open house portion; and,
- Not everyone will hear everyone else's comments.

*WHAT (IF ANYTHING) WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?*

- Babysitting could have been made available;
- Public hearing could have been offered at various sites (see Case Study for Trunk Highway 14 Corridor); and,
- Verified that the date would accommodate key stakeholders' (e.g., local officials) schedules.

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Public Involvement Technique Template

# 9
# Involve – Open Forums/Open Houses

*TECHNIQUE:*

**Open House Meetings**

*BRIEF DESCRIPTION:*

The meeting included all agencies involved in the project and experts for all technical aspects of the project available to answer questions.

**REFERENCE:** SDIC "Citizen Participation Handbook"

*WHY DID YOU USE THIS TECHNIQUE?*

This was a highly controversial project that involved many agencies and affected many people. Details of the project were complex and were best understood when experts were available on-site. It also provided convenience for customers and demonstrated cooperation between agencies. There was no opportunity to "grandstand" when commenting on the project.

*HOW DID THIS TECHNIQUE CONTRIBUTE TO THE DECISION OR PROJECT OUTCOME?*

We were able to gauge the support and gather valuable input on some project details. We were able to present the project information in detail to those interested.

*WHAT (IF ANY) WERE THE DRAWBACKS OF USING THIS TECHNIQUE?*

It required a very large effort (three meetings, four hours each, three different locations). Follow-up on all the input also requires a large effort.

*WHAT (IF ANYTHING) WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?*

At each of the three meetings we planned to have a 15-minute "orientation talk." After the first meetings, it was videotaped and played continuously. We had this in the same room as the open house and I think it should have been in a separate room.

## *USEFULNESS*

**FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:**

**RATE 1 - 10**
*(10 is highest level of usefulness)*

**LONG-RANGE (20 YEAR) PLANNING- - - - - - 10**

**CORRIDOR STUDIES - - - - - - - 10**

**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT - - 10**

**PROGRAMMING - - 3**

**CONSTRUCTION - - 1**

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# 10
# Involve – Open Forums/Open Houses

*TECHNIQUE:*

**"Open House" Style Public Hearing**

*BRIEF DESCRIPTION:*

The general public would review and give their comments at their own pace. The meeting started at 6 p.m. and ended at about 9 p.m..

**Step 1:** The general public would enter a reception area, they would be greeted by a staff person, who would provide them with handouts, request that they sign an attendance sheet, and ask them to sit for a short welcome/instructional presentation. (The presentation would be made by a staff person, after a set number of people were assembled or a set time period elapsed.) The presentation would identify the state and federal requirements that pertained to public involvement, instruct the public on how to participate in this hearing, identify locations where information on the project was available (other than at the meeting), and how and where to submit written comments during and after the public hearing. The participants were instructed to proceed into the next area where information stations were set up. The handout provided to participants included a public hearing floor plan that identified the information stations.

**Step 2:** The public would proceed through the stations at their own pace. Staff would be available to answer questions at all stations. (Note : Station 1 - Layout; Station 2 - Right-of-Way; Station 3 - Reports and Traffic; Station - 4 Funding)

**Step 3:** The public would have to enter a third area before they could leave. Written comments were accepted at Station 5. Tables, chairs, comment forms, and pencils were provided at this location. Oral comments were accepted at Station 6. In this area, two court reporters and a staff employee were located. The three oral testimony locations were spaced far apart to allow as much privacy as could be achieved. Also, to assure more privacy, staff were stationed at the door going into this area to prevent lines from developing by any of the oral testimony sites.

**Step 4:** The public would leave the site by a different location than that by which they arrived.

*WHY DID YOU USE THIS TECHNIQUE?*

Mn/DOT was informed that a group was organized to stop the project. A special meeting by the city council was to be held concurrently with the hearing in the same area. The concern arose over the space required and the disturbance (to both meetings) that might result, and that the local radio station would be broadcasting live from the hearing.

## USEFULNESS

**FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:**

**RATE 1 - 10**
*(10 is highest level of usefulness)*

**LONG-RANGE (20 YEAR) PLANNING - - - - - - 10**

**CORRIDOR STUDIES - - - - - - - 10**

**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT - - 10**

**PROGRAMMING - - 3**

**CONSTRUCTION - - 1**

*HOW DID THIS TECHNIQUE CONTRIBUTE TO THE DECISION OR PROJECT OUTCOME?*

The local radio station's presence was not disruptive and served as another means of reminding people that the hearing was being held and encouraging them to participate. The city council held a short orderly meeting which did not disrupt the hearing.

The hearing was successful. It was well attended by the public and they participated in the process. They listened, asked questions, stated opinions and suggestions, and provided formal comments for the public hearing record.

One hundred and forty-nine people signed the attendance sheet. A few attendees failed to sign in. The tally of comments recorded by written, oral, and petitions, was 364 for the bypass, 75 people against, and four undecided.

*WHAT (IF ANY) WERE THE DRAWBACKS OF USING THIS TECHNIQUE?*

The availability of site space and ability to separate the areas were problematic. Also the large number of staff at the hearing (12 Mn/DOT employees, three consultant staff, and two court reporters.)

*WHAT (IF ANYTHING) WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?*

None

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# 11
# Involve – Open Forums/Open Houses

*TECHNIQUE:*

**Public Open House**

*BRIEF DESCRIPTION:*

This technique is similar to a public hearing except that no formal presentation is made. Displays are set around the room and attendees are welcome to make comments or ask questions of staff. This is an informal way to display and disseminate information.

**REFERENCE:**

USDOT, "Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision-Making," September 1996

*WHY DID YOU USE THIS TECHNIQUE?*

Because it is informal and not as intimidating as a public hearing, participants can spend as much time on specific issues or topics as they want. People also feel more comfortable communicating in a one-on-one setting than having to stand and speak in front of a group as in a formal public hearing.

*HOW DOES THIS TECHNIQUE CONTRIBUTE TO A DECISION OR PROJECT OUTCOME?*

This process identified issues and concerns not yet considered. New solutions were brought up for potential consideration.

*WHAT (IF ANY) WERE THE DRAWBACKS OF USING THIS TECHNIQUE?*

Not everyone arrives at the same time. Information needs to be continually repeated and it takes a greater effort in developing graphics and displays.

*WHAT (IF ANYTHING) WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?*

Good assistants who are knowledgeable about the subject are needed to help answer questions.

## *USEFULNESS*

**FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:**

**RATE 1 - 10**
*(10 is highest level of usefulness)*

**LONG-RANGE (20 YEAR) PLANNING - - - - - - 10**

**CORRIDOR STUDIES - - - - - - - 10**

**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT - - 10**

**PROGRAMMING - - 3**

**CONSTRUCTION - - 1**

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# 12
# Involve – Open Forums/Open Houses

*TECHNIQUE:*

**Combined Open House/Public Meeting**

*BRIEF DESCRIPTION:*

Combination open house and quasi-public hearing for the Trunk Highway 12 realignment. Pamphlets, flyers, and displays were available along with representatives from different functional areas, e.g., R/W, preliminary design, and planning to answer questions. People were allowed to give testimony for the public record, but this activity took place away from the main display area. People could enter these areas for testimony and leave as they pleased. There were two large group presentations after which questions were fielded.

*WHY DID YOU USE THIS TECHNIQUE?*

It enabled more balanced and reasoned testimony, in addition to being a forum for disseminating and answering questions from the public.

*HOW DOES THIS TECHNIQUE CONTRIBUTE TO A DECISION OR PROJECT OUTCOME?*

People were able to speak their mind, and there was less disruption.

*WHAT (IF ANY) WERE THE DRAWBACKS OF USING THIS TECHNIQUE?*

None. There were increased costs associated with hiring court reporters to take testimony.

*WHAT (IF ANYTHING) WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?*

Nothing. But be aware of choosing a neutral facility.

## *USEFULNESS*

**FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:**

**RATE 1 - 10**
*(10 is highest level of usefulness)*

**LONG-RANGE (20 YEAR) PLANNING - - - - - - 10**

**CORRIDOR STUDIES - - - - - - - 10**

**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT - - 10**

**PROGRAMMING - - 3**

**CONSTRUCTION - - 1**

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# 13
# Involve – Visioning

*TECHNIQUE:*

**Interactive Electronic Polling**

*BRIEF DESCRIPTION:*

Interactive electronic polling uses keypads linked to a computer hardware/software station to gather participants' feedback and report results in real time. The tool can be used in visioning, brainstorming, setting priorities, and other group decision processes.

*WHY DID YOU USE THIS TECHNIQUE?*

We have used this technology in various forums to help identify and establish group consensus regarding policies, preferred alternatives, and program priorities.

*HOW DOES THIS TECHNIQUE CONTRIBUTE TO A DECISION OR PROJECT OUTCOME?*

This technique allows a group to establish their most important policies or priorities quickly, especially if there are a large number of options to choose from. It also aids in quickly gauging the level of agreement or disagreement among group members.

*WHAT (IF ANY) WERE THE DRAWBACKS OF USING THIS TECHNIQUE?*

The main drawback is in having inexperienced operators running the system. This can cause meeting slowdowns.

*WHAT (IF ANYTHING) WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?*

Nothing. This is a useful tool for framing abstract issues effectively.

## *USEFULNESS*

**FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:**

**RATE 1 - 10**
*(10 is highest level of usefulness)*

**LONG-RANGE (20 YEAR) PLANNING - - - - - - 7**

**CORRIDOR STUDIES - - - - - - - 4-5**

**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT - - 4-5**

**PROGRAMMING - - 8**

**CONSTRUCTION - - 2**

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# 14
# Involve – Small Group Techniques

*TECHNIQUE:*

**Non-Traditional Stakeholder's Dialogue Process**

*BRIEF DESCRIPTION:*

This method was used to engage non-traditional stakeholder groups in dialogues (two-way discussions) about the issues of participation and involvement. Key elements of the methodology included:

- A Steering Committee was formed to oversee and guide the project. The Steering Committee consisted of leaders of affected non-traditional communities and also transportation professionals from Mn/DOT, Humphrey Institute, the Metropolitan Council, and the Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul.
- A series of small dialogue meetings was held with two-to-three Mn/DOT staff and members of non-traditional stakeholder communities, with a commitment to follow-up the meetings with additional information and continued contact.
- Dialogue meetings were held in neighborhoods where non-traditional stakeholders reside, and were facilitated by a consultant who explained Mn/DOT's current public involvement process and asked participants what they thought of it and how it could be improved to better involve non-traditional stakeholders.
- Mn/DOT staff participated in the project as equal players, not as experts.
- A "mega" (large community) meeting was held to give dialogue meeting participants from across the Twin Cities an opportunity to review project findings, share ideas, prioritize issues, and make recommendations.
- A Response Team, consisting of Mn/DOT and Metropolitan Council staff, reviewed project findings and recommendations and recommended to Mn/DOT's deputy commissioners actions that should be taken to improve the public involvement process.
- A final report was widely distributed to those who participated in the dialogue meeting process. In addition, a "Planning and Project Development Handbook" was compiled with ideas shared by the dialogue participants on how to better involve non-traditional stakeholders in Mn/DOT's public involvement process.

**REFERENCE:**

"Non-Traditional Transportation Stakeholder/Dialogue Project," Final Report (Mn/DOT, April 1997)

"Methods and Approaches to Enhance Involvement in Non-Traditional Transportation Stakeholder Communities and Neighborhoods" - A Handbook for Mn/DOT Planning and Project Development Project Managers (Mn/DOT, April 1997.) Both are included as Appendices.

## USEFULNESS

**FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:**

**RATE 1 - 10**
*(10 is highest level of usefulness)*

**LONG-RANGE (20 YEAR) PLANNING - - - - - - 5**

**CORRIDOR STUDIES - - - - - - - - 7**

**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT - - - 8**

**PROGRAMMING - - 3**

**CONSTRUCTION - - 6**

*WHY DID YOU USE THIS TECHNIQUE?*

To identify non-traditional stakeholder groups (defined as people of color, low-income constituencies, community and neighborhood groups, members of the disabled community, and civic and cultural groups) in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

- To build partnerships with non-traditional transportation stakeholders.
- To invite those groups to become involved in Mn/DOT's public participation processes.
- To create a forum for dialogue and two-way learning so that:
  - Mn/DOT is better prepared to develop and facilitate effective involvement processes that reach out to non-traditional stakeholders.
  - Non-traditional stakeholders are better prepared to effectively participate in planning and project design processes.

*HOW DID THIS TECHNIQUE CONTRIBUTE TO THE DECISION OR PROJECT OUTCOME?*

Findings and recommendations that resulted from the dialogue process were reviewed by the Mn/DOT Response Team which came up with six action recommendations. The overall purpose of the recommendations was to: 1) incorporate needs and values of non-traditional transportation stakeholders into Mn/DOT's planning and project development practices and 2) improve linkages between community needs and Mn/DOT plans and programs.

*WHAT (IF ANY) WERE THE DRAWBACKS OF USING THIS TECHNIQUE?*

The relatively small number of people directly involved in the dialogue meetings caused some observers to question the validity of the information received through the process. The dialogue process is not intended to be a scientific study, but rather a means to communicate and understand different viewpoints and values.

*WHAT (IF ANYTHING) WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?*

Other agencies would be strongly encouraged to participate more fully in the process (Metropolitan Council, Minneapolis, St. Paul) and steering committee members would be more strongly encouraged to participate in dialogue meetings as well.

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# 15
# Involve - Small Group Techniques

*TECHNIQUE:*

**Structured Public Meeting**

*BRIEF DESCRIPTION:*

A structured public meeting is similar to a public meeting as both provide an opportunity to share information and obtain informal community input. However, a structured public meeting differs from a traditional one in that meeting membership is balanced to ensure participation from different community and/or geographic interests.

**REFERENCE:**

"Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision Making," USDOT, September 1996

*WHY DID YOU USE THIS TECHNIQUE?*

This meeting technique was selected because early public input to the district's "Long-Range Transportation Plan" was considered critical to identify the needs and issues affecting the transportation system. The district chose to develop a structured membership due to the difficulties in getting people to attend public meetings – especially to discuss long-range transportation planning.

The technique allowed the district to identify a diverse audience for each meeting, one that possessed a knowledge of local transportation issues, as well as an appreciation for how transportation contributes to the area's social and economic goals. The meetings were also used as a means to educate the public about the district's planning process and the status of its transportation system.

*(Note: The district received greater than expected turn-out at each meeting averaging over 16 people. Part of this success had to do with the manner by which persons were selected and approached to participate. The district, with support from RDCs and various county officials, personally invited members, first by phone and then by follow-up letter. The meetings were also open to the general public. Announcements were made via a news release that was sent out to the local media.)*

## USEFULNESS

**FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:**

**RATE 1 - 10**
*(10 is highest level of usefulness)*

**LONG-RANGE (20 YEAR) PLANNING - - - - - - 9**

**CORRIDOR STUDIES - - - - - - - - 9**

**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT - - - 6**

**PROGRAMMING - - 3**

**CONSTRUCTION - - 3**

*HOW DID THIS TECHNIQUE CONTRIBUTE TO THE DECISION OR PROJECT OUTCOME?*

This technique enabled our district to better forecast and balance attendance at each of the meetings. As a result of applying this technique, we expect to gain a better understanding of our transportation needs.

Participation at the meetings was selected based on a list of suggested membership categories, e.g., major employers, shippers, tourism, agriculture, emergency management, etc. This ensured that a core group of transportation interests were represented at each meeting who could participate in a comprehensive discussion of the area's transportation issues and needs.

Since membership was structured and the meetings were held at the county level, we were able to anticipate some of the local issues that would later be raised at the meetings. This helped staff focus and prepare for the meetings. And, because a meeting was conducted in each county, the district was able to receive more intimate knowledge and input concerning the needs and issues than might otherwise have emerged if the meetings were held at the regional or district level.

*WHAT (IF ANY) WERE THE DRAWBACKS OF USING THIS TECHNIQUE?*

One of the drawbacks of using this technique was that it was rather labor and resource intensive. Since the meetings were conducted at the county level, meeting packets were individually customized requiring additional preparation activities for staff. Considerable staff travel time and coordination were also required.

The analysis and management of the data collected from the public meetings also presents another challenge for those using this technique. Careful planning should be done prior to conducting the meetings to ensure that the type of input gathered can be readily made part of existing data management and decision-making processes. Attention to this early on in the planning stages may influence the process and types of questions that are asked when obtaining public input.

The structured public meeting technique can have the potential of raising false expectations on the part of some meeting participants. This is especially true if the purpose of the meeting is not clearly communicated up front. Therefore, it is essential to establish a clear meeting purpose and a set of ground rules so as not to leave the

group feeling that Mn/DOT will be taking action to "fix" every need without regard to cost or planning/engineering feasibility.

At some of the meetings, there was a sense that several of the participants were skeptical about whether the district would follow through by truly considering their input in the decision-making process. Staff reassured members that the district would be returning later in the fall to report back on how their comments were considered in the final draft plan. Staff conducted a quality check at the end of each meeting. Several people commented that they were supportive of the district's commitment to hold a second round of meetings and felt it was integral to the overall planning process. Based on these sort of comments, it would appear that a follow-up public meeting may be essential if this type of technique is used at the beginning of a planning process in identifying needs and issues. This may be a potential drawback if there is only a limited amount of time to complete a plan.

*WHAT (IF ANYTHING) WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?*

Staff should have provided more time for planning and preparation of the meetings. Preparing meeting materials earlier would have given an opportunity to test and preview them for their effectiveness. It would have also provided additional time to conduct rehearsals ensuring that everyone was familiar with the subject matter and that the materials are suitable for presentation. Additionally, staff should have conducted an evaluation of its discussion guide with a test group to determine the effectiveness of the questions asked during the public input period of the meeting.

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# 16
# Involve - Small Group Techniques

*TECHNIQUE:*

**Citizens Jury**

*BRIEF DESCRIPTION:*

The jury, selected from broad representation around the Twin Cities metropolitan area, heard testimony from experts on various aspects of the surface transportation system and financing, present and future congestion, and recommendations for solutions. They ultimately voted on various aspects of the concept. This input was sought for a comprehensive road pricing study that was ongoing in the Twin Cities metro area.

**REFERENCE:**

"Road Pricing Study: Final Report," by Mn/DOT and Metropolitan Council, 1997.

*WHY DID YOU USE THIS TECHNIQUE?*

We felt the citizens jury process would allow for a complete examination of the issues and a thorough education of a small segment of the public on the topic of road pricing.

*HOW DID THIS TECHNIQUE CONTRIBUTE TO THE DECISION OR PROJECT OUTCOME?*

The public outreach data were integral to developing the recommendation brought to the legislature concerning the next steps for road pricing.

*WHAT (IF ANY) WERE THE DRAWBACKS OF USING THIS TECHNIQUE?*

We believed that parts of our region were not represented equally on the jury.

*WHAT (IF ANYTHING) WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?*

We would attempt to more adequately balance representation.

## USEFULNESS

**FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:**

**RATE 1 - 10**
*(10 is highest level of usefulness)*

**LONG-RANGE (20 YEAR) PLANNING - - - - - - 10**

**CORRIDOR STUDIES - - - - - - - - 2**

**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT - - - 5**

**PROGRAMMING - - 3**

**CONSTRUCTION - - 1**

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Public Involvement
Technique Template

# 17
# Feedback – Focus Groups

*TECHNIQUE:*

**Focus Group**

*BRIEF DESCRIPTION:*

A focus group is a small group discussion with professional leadership. A carefully selected group of individuals convenes to discuss and give opinions on a single topic. Borrowed from the marketing and advertising industry, it is a tool to gauge public opinion, identify customer concerns, needs, wants, and expectations. It has these basic features:

- A carefully-crafted agenda, with five or six major questions at most;
- Emphasis on gathering perspectives, insights, and opinions of participants through conversation and interaction;
- Identification of major points of agreement and divergence of opinion;
- Minimal presentation material to set context and subject;
- Gleaning, not shaping, of opinions or perspectives;
- Eight to 12 participants; and,
- Understanding that the participants' role is to give personal insights and perspectives.

**REFERENCE:**

USDOT, "Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision-Making," September 1996.

*WHY DID YOU USE THIS TECHNIQUE?*

The Public Involvement Task Force wanted to get feedback from the public regarding how they wanted to be involved in Mn/DOT's planning, programming, and project development processes. This information could be most effectively gleaned through a focus group process, where the purpose was purely information gathering using a neutral facilitator, and not a persuasive effort led by Mn/DOT staff.

## USEFULNESS

**FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:**

**RATE 1 - 10**
*(10 is highest level of usefulness)*

**LONG-RANGE (20 YEAR) PLANNING - - - - - - 10**

**CORRIDOR STUDIES - - - - - - - 10**

**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT - - - 7**

**PROGRAMMING - - 6**

**CONSTRUCTION - - 3**

*HOW DID THIS TECHNIQUE CONTRIBUTE TO THE DECISION OR PROJECT OUTCOME?*

The focus group results will be crucial to any project manager or person developing a public involvement plan. These focus groups, along with the results, are discussed at length in Chapter 1 of *Hear Every Voice: A Guide to Public Involvement in Mn/DOT.*

*WHAT (IF ANY) WERE THE DRAWBACKS OF USING THIS TECHNIQUE?*

Cost is an issue.

*WHAT (IF ANYTHING) WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?*

Nothing.

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# 18
# Special Techniques – Interactive Displays and Kiosks

*TECHNIQUE:*

**Interactive Video Interview Station (IVIS™)**

*BRIEF DESCRIPTION:*

The IVIS survey is a proprietary technique which uses computer stations to collect statistical information on demographics and public opinion regarding issues. We deployed these stations around the Twin Cities metro area seeking input on a proposed road pricing project and to gauge people's perceptions of road pricing in general.

**REFERENCE:**

"Road Pricing Study: Final Report," by Mn/DOT and Metropolitan Council, 1997.

*WHY DID YOU USE THIS TECHNIQUE?*

IVIS gave us statistically supported information on the acceptance of the concept of road pricing.

*HOW DID THIS TECHNIQUE CONTRIBUTE TO THE DECISION OR PROJECT OUTCOME?*

The public outreach data were integral to developing the recommendation brought to the legislature concerning the next steps for road pricing.

*WHAT (IF ANY) WERE THE DRAWBACKS OF USING THIS TECHNIQUE?*

In the IVIS survey, a tremendous amount of time, money, and coordination was needed to deploy the technique.

*WHAT (IF ANYTHING) WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?*

Nothing

## USEFULNESS

**FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:**

**RATE 1 - 10**
*(10 is highest level of usefulness)*

**LONG-RANGE (20 YEAR) PLANNING - - - - - - 7**

**CORRIDOR STUDIES - - - - - - - - 5**

**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT - - - 5**

**PROGRAMMING - - 3**

**CONSTRUCTION - - 5**

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# 19
# Special Techniques – Computer Presentations and Simulations

*TECHNIQUE:*

**Computer Enhanced Photography - Visual Imaging**

*BRIEF DESCRIPTION:*

Color pictures were taken from predetermined locations in the field. The future plan was superimposed on the existing photo to scale. The more accurately you can identify the location the photo was taken the better. One should also note the type of lens and the f-stop setting on the camera.

**REFERENCE:**
Mn/DOT, Dennis Moline, Technical support

*WHY DID YOU USE THIS TECHNIQUE?*

To show the visual impact of alternatives and to get a realistic picture of how each alternative would appear. The public was having a difficult time understanding the alternatives from standard layouts.

*HOW DID THIS TECHNIQUE CONTRIBUTE TO THE DECISION OR PROJECT OUTCOME?*

Imaging helped convince the potentially affected individuals that the proposed project could be designed to be aesthetically pleasing.

*WHAT (IF ANY) WERE THE DRAWBACKS OF USING THIS TECHNIQUE?*

Getting all the information together to be able to depict the proposed alternatives as realistically as possible was difficult. The layout must be developed to sufficient detail and ideally should be developed in GEOPAK.

*WHAT (IF ANYTHING) WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?*

Allow more lead time, check on availability of staff to perform the work. This may be where a consultant is needed.

## *USEFULNESS*

**FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:**

**RATE 1 - 10**
*(10 is highest level of usefulness)*

**LONG-RANGE (20 YEAR) PLANNING - - - - - - 1**

**CORRIDOR STUDIES - - - - - - - 10**

**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT - - - 1**

**PROGRAMMING - 10**

**CONSTRUCTION - - 7**

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# CHAPTER 6
# HEAR EVERY VOICE
# PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT CASE STUDIES

Public Involvement

Case Study

# 20
# Inform - Citizen Advisory Committee
# Involve - Public Meetings

*CASE STUDY TITLE:*

**Trunk Highway 23 Task Force, Pine County, Minnesota**

☑ PLANNING

☐ PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

**SCOPE:** Corridor Planning

*PROBLEM STATEMENT AND LOCATION DESCRIPTION:*

- Local citizens and legislators were concerned about the condition of a 20-mile segment of Trunk Highway 23 from Askov to Nickerson in Pine County, Minnesota.
- A public information meeting was held to discuss concerns about the condition of the roadway. A large number of concerned citizens attended the meeting. Mn/DOT did not have a plan to address the condition of the road.
- In order to involve the citizens, a task force was formed of local citizens with Mn/DOT technical support. The task force was charged with identifying problems and prioritizing solutions to improve the roadway within a strict budget. The project manager met with the task force on a monthly basis for several months before a plan was developed. The final plan was a written, detailed report identifying fix options and costs.
- From this plan, a two-phase solution arose that was implemented within a period of three years. The solution addressed specific safety concerns, failed culverts, and the roadway surface.

*LIST ALL PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES USED, DESCRIBING STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN THIS PARTICULAR CASE:*

| TECHNIQUE | STRENGTH | WEAKNESS |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Public Information Meeting | * MnDOT acknowledges public concerns | |
| 2. Task Force | * Identifies Public Priorities<br>* Educate Public about Mn/DOT Processes<br>* Gets Public Involved | * Time consuming |

*WAS THIS TECHNIQUE EFFECTIVE IN REACHING MINORITY AND/OR LOW-INCOME CITIZENS?*

NO. The public involvement technique used was intended to deal with the citizens who were concerned about the condition of the roadway and had asked Mn/DOT how they could have an impact in the planning efforts.

*OUTCOME OF ACTIVITY, INDICATING HOW PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT CONTRIBUTED TO THE DECISION OR PROJECT RESULT:*

The entire project will be completed within a budget that is a fraction of that for reconstruction and will provide a solution with a long-term service life.

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Public Involvement

Case Study

# 21
# Transportation Action Model

*CASE STUDY TITLE:*

**Transportation Action Model in Nisswa**

☑ PLANNING

☐ PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

**SCOPE:** The scope of this planning process included state, county and city issues in a rural environment.

*PROBLEM STATEMENT AND LOCATION DESCRIPTION:*

The city of Nisswa participated in the Transportation Action Model (TAM) to address issues of traffic safety, parking, and seasonal congestion from tourism. The intersection of Trunk Highway 371 and County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 18/Main Street provides the main entry point to the city, but its design makes left hand turns onto T.H. 371 dangerous and creates conflicts with pedestrian traffic. These hazards are compounded during summer months by tourist traffic unfamiliar with the intersection. Other concerns included parking and pedestrian traffic on Main Street and the potential re-routing of CSAH 18.

*LIST ALL PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES USED, DESCRIBING STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN THIS PARTICULAR CASE:*

**TECHNIQUE**

- Four public meetings that allowed the citizens of Nisswa to identify and prioritize their transportation issues and potential solutions.
- News articles that reviewed events of the previous meeting and previewed the agenda of the next meeting.

**STRENGTH**

- Not having a preset agenda from transportation officials allows citizens to explore their transportation system freely and generate solutions that work best for the transportation environment.
- This method kept the public involved and helped maintain the momentum of the participants.

**WEAKNESS**

- Receiving the commitment from citizens to attend four meetings over a 21-week period is a potential barrier. To keep this from becoming an issue, the pre-work, assessing whether a community should do a TAM, is critical. Also, experiences indicate that four meetings may not be enough and time lines should be flexible to allow for a fifth meeting.

- The newspaper space may not always be available for announcements.

**TECHNIQUE**

- Specialized mailings stating meeting times and location went out to participants prior to each of the four public meetings.
- Outside facilitation.

**STRENGTH**

- The mailings were a method of communicating to a core group and providing participants with a better sense of connection to the process.
- Eases the sense that there is a preset agenda.

**WEAKNESS**

- Mailings must be sent out in a timely fashion.
- Availability and/or cost of a facilitator may be a barrier.

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*WAS THIS TECHNIQUE EFFECTIVE IN REACHING MINORITY AND/OR LOW-INCOME CITIZENS?*

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Due to the demographics of Nisswa, primarily white, middle class with a median age of approximately 48, no special effort was made to target these groups.

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*OUTCOME OF ACTIVITY, INDICATING HOW PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT CONTRIBUTED TO THE DECISION OR PROJECT RESULT:*

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The result of the TAM in Nisswa was the creation of an action plan that was developed and written by a group of citizens with some technical assistance from Mn/DOT. The action plan described the transportation issues and their solutions as discussed by the citizens of Nisswa. The plan was adopted by the city and will be part of future transportation plans at the county and state level.

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Public Involvement

Case Study

# 22
# Systematic Development of Informed Consent

*CASE STUDY TITLE:*

**Metro Division's Transportation System Plan**

☑ PLANNING

☐ PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

**SCOPE:** Regional

*PROBLEM STATEMENT AND LOCATION DESCRIPTION:*

The Metro Division needed to establish a long-range, transportation system plan to meet the mission established for the department. With scarce resources available, they needed to maximize the dollars, time, and energy available to provide transportation systems that get people and goods to market and enhance the "quality of life" for all citizens. In the future, trips made by the metro population are expected to continue to grow as the population increases. At the same time that trips are increasing, the ability to expand the system will be limited as funding is expected to be stagnant, while the costs associated with maintaining an aging highway infrastructure continue to increase. Given such a scenario, public input is crucial in defining a focus for available transportation resources.

The Metro Division's "Transportation System Plan" (TSP) included the seven-county metro region (Anoka, Hennepin, Carver, Scott, Dakota, Ramsey, and Washington counties) in addition to Chisago county.

*LIST ALL PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES USED, DESCRIBING STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN THIS PARTICULAR CASE:*

A process called the Systematic Development of Informed Consent (SDIC), developed by Hans and Annemarie Bleiker of the Institute for Participatory Management and Planning was used. This approach provided a method for clearly defining and communicating the problem and for identifying and involving potentially affected citizens and interest groups (see pp. 50-51 of *Hear Every Voice* for more information, re: SDIC)

The public involvement process was instituted in phases. Phase I primarily involved communicating with the internal audience and planning partners. Market research was used to fulfill external audience consent-building objectives. The goal of Phase II was to establish a long-range transportation picture for the region by communicating with communities the consequences and long-term impacts of transportation choices.

Of 15 SDIC Citizen Participation Principles, the following participation objectives were selected as being the most important to address for an effective and successful Transportation System Plan.

#1 Establish the Agency's Legitimacy.
#3 Establish the Process' Legitimacy.
#5 Establish & Maintain Legitimacy of Assumptions & Earlier Decisions.
#6 Get to Know All of the Potentially Affected Interests.
#7 Learn to See the Project Through Their Eyes.
#10 Articulate & Clarify Key Issues.
#11 Nurture & Protect Your Credibility.
#13 Have All Information Received and Understood by the Various Interests.

*WAS THIS TECHNIQUE EFFECTIVE IN REACHING MINORITY AND/OR LOW-INCOME CITIZENS?*

No. None with specific focus to involve non-traditional stakeholders.

*OUTCOME OF ACTIVITY, INDICATING HOW PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT CONTRIBUTED TO THE DECISION OR PROJECT RESULT:*

Public involvement strategies were used throughout the plan. The external focus began after the first draft had been completed. Meetings were held at all eight metro county transportation facilities. An overview of how the TSP was intended to fit in with existing planning processes was given. Ideas and input from county and city staff were solicited during business hours, and the general public was invited in the evening. After this point in the TSP process, newsletters kept people in touch with the Plan's progress. A second round of meetings was held after the first draft was completed.

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Public Involvement

Case Study

# 23
# Inform - Informational Materials
# Inform - Media Strategies

*CASE STUDY TITLE:*

☐ PLANNING

☑ PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

**Trunk Highway 14 Corridor Study**

**SCOPE:**

3 Counties (Blue Earth, Waseca, and Steele)

3 Cities (Janesville, Waseca, and Owatonna)

The corridor includes Mn/DOT Districts 6 and 7. District 7 is leading the corridor study.

*PROBLEM STATEMENT AND LOCATION DESCRIPTION:*

For many years there has been regional interest in upgrading Trunk Highway 14 from Mankato to Owatonna. District 6 and District 7 initiated a corridor study along this route in 1992. The study is being performed by the consulting firm BRW, and includes an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Several alternatives were determined through a scoping process and then analyzed and documented in a draft EIS. The public has been engaged in many ways throughout the study. Following publication of the draft EIS, a location public hearing was held and public and agency comments were received. The end result of the study will be a selected alignment and design for Trunk Highway 14 between Trunk Highway 60 and I-35 at Owatonna.

*LIST ALL PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES USED, DESCRIBING STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN THIS PARTICULAR CASE:*

General Statement: A numerous, wide variety of one-way and two-way communication techniques were used. We adapted techniques to deal with the issues as they arose. The techniques which were used are described in the technique templates 2-3 and 5-8.

*WAS THIS TECHNIQUE EFFECTIVE IN REACHING MINORITY AND/OR LOW-INCOME CITIZENS?*

No, we didn't make any extra effort. The percent of the population that includes minorities is very low in this area. All affected landowners would have been on the mailing list, so they received newsletters and notices about public meetings.

*OUTCOME OF ACTIVITY, INDICATING HOW PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT CONTRIBUTED TO THE DECISION OR PROJECT RESULT:*

We used the centrally located (and most affected) city, Waseca, as the site for most public meetings. (The newsletters and news releases always went to the entire corridor.) As a result of holding most meetings in Waseca, many people in Owatonna and Steele County didn't perceive or understand the importance of being involved in the study until after an alignment decision was made. Then they began to realize the impacts and implications the decision would have on them. After some public outcry, Mn/DOT held a special meeting in Owatonna, to hear their concerns. The comments received were enough to cause Mn/DOT to reanalyze and reconsider the alignment decision.

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